

Katmai



Building in an Ashen Land: Historic Resource Study

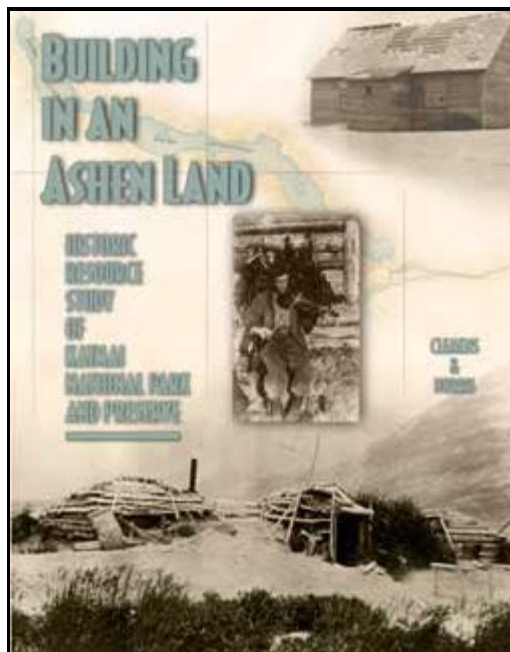
BUILDING IN AN ASHEN LAND

Historic Resource Study of Katmai National Park and Preserve

Janet Clemens
Frank Norris

1999

National Park Service
Alaska Support Office
Anchorage, Alaska



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Katmai Villiage building. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expedition Collection, Box I, 3944.*

Roy Fure, a longtime trapper, fisherman, and prospector, is shown with several traps hanging on the cabin wall behind him. *NPS-LACL Photo Collection.*

Katmai barabararas covered with volcanic ash, 1915. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expedition Collection, Box I, 3946.*

Map used on the front and back covers is adapted from the "Katmai National Monument, Alaska, Surveyed by the Katmai Expedition of the National Geographic Society, 1917-1919," Griggs, *The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes.*

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PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

Purpose

A historic resource study (HRS) is an NPS management document designed to assess known historic properties and address their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places, commonly known as the National Register. Historic Resource Studies also are prepared to meet federal agency requirements set forth in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and to contribute to and shape park planning, priorities, actions, and decisions that may directly or indirectly benefit, affect, or pose a threat to historic properties. Such a study provides the park with base line historical material on known resources and historic properties, and develops contexts within which these and yet undiscovered resources may have association and meaning. As a result, an HRS integrates cultural resources into the larger scheme of resource management and park identity.

This HRS, which is a revision of a similar study printed in 1971, was researched and written in accordance with the Cultural Resources Management Guideline (formerly known as [NPS-28](#)) and sections 101 and 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. It develops historical themes and contexts for the land within Katmai National Park and Preserve and shows how these resources relate to the surrounding areas. It also identifies and provides evaluations for National Register of Historic Places eligible properties as well as recommendations for purposes of NPS planning, interpretation, compliance, and natural and cultural resource management directives.





Mrs. Palakia Melgenak, a former Savonoski resident, at South Naknek during the summer of 1961. Photograph from "Mount Katmai, Alaska Eruption Tape Recording Made by Wilbur A. Davis of the University of Oregon, July-August 1961." *NPS-AKSO Katmai park file.*

Summary

People have always been drawn to Katmai's rich natural resources, whether for catching fish and furbearing animals, researching volcanic activity and its effects, mining, or sightseeing. Essentially, this study is a collective view of what human activity has taken place in Katmai by looking at what buildings and structures have been constructed. For example, early occupation sites reveal semi-subterranean houses used by the Native people, while log cabins reflect a twentieth century trapping lifestyle. The 1912 volcanic eruption of Novarupta is a pivotal event in Katmai's history. It forced residents to leave, dramatically changed the landscape and, at a minimum, buried existing settlements in ash and pumice. No sooner had the ash settled, however, than scientific investigations to the area began. The resulting discoveries led to the establishment of Katmai National

Monument, which set the stage for the demise of trapping and the development of tourism. Hence the study title acknowledges that building activities took place both before and after the landscape was covered in volcanic ash.

Katmai's history is told through ten historic contexts. The chapters are organized first by narratives, which are followed by summaries of the related historic properties and historic preservation recommendations. There is a diversity of historic properties within Katmai. These include former settlement sites, cannery sites, trapping cabins and sites, a fox farm site, a reindeer corral site, mining sites, trails, a shipwreck, an airstrip, visitor cabins and lodges, a fisheries research laboratory and fish ladder, and cabins and rock cairns related to the National Geographic Society's expeditions and other scientific research.

As many sites have not been surveyed, a recurring recommendation in this study is for historical archeological investigations. What follows is a brief list of the historic contexts with related properties that need some level of survey and documentation:

- **Russian and Early American time periods:** Main settlements at Katmai, Kukak, Douglas, and Kaflia, and seasonal camps along the coast from Kamishak Bay south to Hallo Bay.
- **Scientific Expeditions and Research:** Two cabins and rock cairns built by National Geographic Society's expeditions, and Baked Mountain Cabin.
- **Transportation Links:** Katmai Pass and Hallo Bay trails.
- **Mineral Exploration and Mining:** Areas of Kashvik Bay, Geographic Harbor, Takli Island, and the interior lakes.
- **Clam and Salmon Canning:** Two former cannery sites at Kukak and Swikshak bays.
- **Trapping and other Subsistence Lifeways:** The former trapping and subsistence cabins are the largest group of historic sites located within the park. Approximately fifty cabins or complexes are known to have existed at one time, but fewer than twenty have been identified. The majority of sites are located around Naknek Lake, with a few scattered farther north and some along the coast.
- **Reindeer Herding:** One reindeer herder cabin site in the northwest arm of Naknek Lake.
- **Tourism:** The five original Northern Consolidated Airlines camps (Brooks, Kulik, Grosvenor, Nonvianuk, and Battle).

In general, after surveys are completed that identify eligible properties, the study recommends preparation of Multiple Property Documentation Forms. Such forms should then be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for consideration of listing in the National Register. Prepared along with this study were three Determination of Eligibility forms, for Portland Packer Scotty's Cabin, Lake Brooks Field Laboratory; and the Brooks River Ranger Station and Boat Storage House. The SHPO has concurred that all four historic properties are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.





Too Bad. Never can go back to Savonoski to live again. Everything Ash. Good place too, you bet. Fine trees, lots moose, bear and deer. Lots of fish in front of barabara. Not many mosquitoes. Fine church, fine house. Quote by "American Pete" Chief of Savonoski in a 1918 interview, (Griggs, The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, 17). *Photograph of Savonoski courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expedition Collection, Box 4, 3675.*

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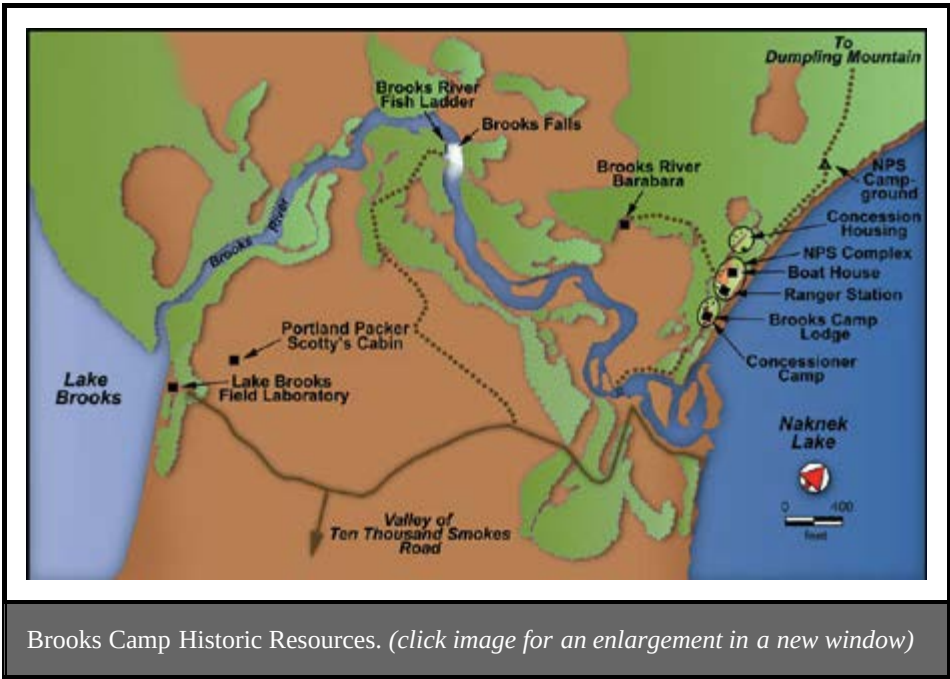
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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

John A. Hussey's 1971 book, *Embattled Katmai: A History of Katmai National Monument* laid the groundwork for this study. The task then was to identify historic contexts, the related built properties, and to gather site specific information as well as additional literature made available since that time. The Alaska Heritage Resource Survey listings from the Office of History and Archaeology provided a baseline of knowledge. The National Park Service-Alaska Support Office provided more detailed survey information through the Katmai Cultural Survey Inventory and the List of Classified Structures files. There have been a few key surveys done in the park. Wilbur E. Davis and Don Dumond conducted the most extensive archeological surveys of the former settlement sites during the 1950s and 1960s. These investigations provided information that led to the listing of several sites on the National Register. The surveys, however, were primarily focused on the prehistoric and not the historic time periods. NPS coastal surveys occurring in 1984 and 1985 documented several cabins and former cannery sites. More recent archeological surveys took place as a result of the oil spill investigations and revealed remains possibly tied to sea mammal hunting camps in the Cape Douglas area. In 1975, NPS historical architect Robert L. Carper conducted the first List of Classified Structures inventory at Katmai. Mike Tollefson, Katmai Ranger, prepared a 1977 cabin inventory that provided a great deal of information about former trappers and their cabins. Additional cabin files became available at the NPS-LAKA Studies Center when the Katmai Park collection was transferred from the King Salmon headquarters into Anchorage.

Valuable source material that was drawn on included the NPS publications by Frank B. Norris, *Tourism in Katmai Country* and [*Isolated Paradise: An Administrative History of Katmai and Aniakchak National Park Units*](#). Archival documents were accessed at both of the University of Alaska campus.' The Fairbanks staff provided assistance with the Alaska Commercial Company Douglas Station records. The University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, staff of Dennis Walle, Katherine Hertel, and Jeff Sinnott, provided essential assistance with the National Geographic Society's Katmai expeditions collection, providing photographic copies, the *Russian Orthodox American Messenger* index and articles. Richard Bland provided the greatly appreciated translations for several of these articles and in an accelerated time frame. Katherine Arndt's knowledge and expertise about the Russian-American time period were invaluable and generously shared in a flurry of e-mails. A thank you goes to Mike Burwell, for his enthusiastic sharing of Alaska shipwreck history and for information about the Moran fleet and the *Golden Forest*. The assistance of several NPS staff members is appreciated including the Lake Clark/Katmai personnel of Jeanne Schaaf, Chief Cultural Resources and Dale Vinson, 106 compliance archeologist. A thank you goes to John Branson, Lake Clark Historian, for sharing information and for providing photographs for the trapping chapter. Also a note of appreciation to Mary Tidlow, NPS-AKSO Architect, for her review of the Determination of Eligibility documents. Thank you to Sandra Anderson, NPS-AKSO Senior Historian, for her unwavering support of this project. The final product came together with the assistance of Frank Broderick's talented graphic abilities.



Historic Contexts and Associated Sites



Sources: George Stroud and Lynn Fuller, NPS, *Katmai Coast Field Season Report, 1984*; Michael J. Tollefson, NPS Katmai Ranger Memo, Old Cabins 3/21/77; Frank B. Norris, *Old Trapper Cabins* map compiled; Frank Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, NPS 1996 and *Tourism Katmai Country*, NPS 1992; Robert F. Griggs, *The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes*, 1922; The National Geographic Society, 1917-1919 Katmai expeditions map; Alaska Heritage Resources Survey, State Office of History and Archaeology; NPS-AKSO LCS files.

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Native/Russian/Early American Main Settlements |  Clam and Salmon Canning |
|  Native/Russian/Early American Other Sites |  Trapping Cabin and Subsistence Sites |
|  Scientific Exploration and Research |  Reindeer Herding and Fox Farming |
|  Transportation |  Fisheries Research and Management |
|  Mining |  Tourism and Early Park Management |



Map of Katmai National Park and Preserve
(click on image for an enlargement in a new window, ~500kb)

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CHAPTER 1:

A PARK OVERVIEW

THE COMBINED PARK AND PRESERVE is located at the base of the Alaska Peninsula, a volcano-studded protrusion which stretches over 400 miles to the southwest before it terminates at False Pass. An undeniable immense area is enclosed within the park. [1] The lands and waters within its boundaries—3,674,541 acres in Katmai National Park and another 418,699 acres in Katmai National Preserve—span almost the width of the peninsula, and its boundaries extend along the base of the peninsula in a north-south orientation for more than 100 miles. The present park and preserve is the fifth largest National Park Service unit in Alaska. Even so, the combined area of the two units is larger than Connecticut and Rhode Island put together; that area is far more expansive than the largest national park in the Lower 48 states and almost twice as large as Yellowstone. [2] Katmai, as sizeable as it is, is only one small part of an enormous federal land block that stretches, in an almost unbroken line, some 400 miles from Kamishak Bay to the tip of the Alaska Peninsula.

Topography

Two physiographic provinces lie within the park: the Aleutian Range and the Nushagak-Bristol Bay Lowlands. [3] The broadly-defined Aleutian Range province constitutes over 90 percent of the park, and is composed of three zones. The Shelikof Strait seacoast zone, which is a band roughly 10 miles wide along the eastern coast, is a rugged, diversified area of bays, beaches, cliffs, canyons, and waterfalls. The Aleutian Mountain zone, which ranges in width from ten to 40 miles, is located inland from the coastal zone. It is an area of volcanic peaks and glaciers; summits within the zone range from the 3,000-foot level to Mount Denison which, at 7,606 feet (2,318 meters) is the highest point in the park. The last zone in the Aleutian province is the lake region—the so-called Hudsonian zone—which is dominated by lakes, ponds and other hydrographic features. In the eastern portion of the zone, these features are separated by low mountains and hills, while in the western part the terrain opens up and the hills diminish. [4]

The Nushagak-Bristol Bay Lowlands, which are separated from the Aleutian Range physiographic province by the Bruin Bay earthquake fault, is located in the southwestern corner of the park and constitutes only a small part of it. The terrain in this province is relatively flat, with many poorly drained lakes. A number of low ridges, sand dunes and meandering streams break the uniformity of this area. [5]





National Geographic Society members descending the Katmai Crater, August 1919. Photographed by Emery C. Kolb. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expedition Collection, Box 5, 5080*

Biotic Resources

Nature is effusive and diverse in much of the Katmai country. Tundra carpets much of the area; barren and sparse dry tundra is found in many of the higher elevations, while moist tundra dominates the lowland areas in the western third of the park. The boreal forest vegetation complex predominates in more climatically advantageous, lower elevation areas, primarily in river valleys and along lake shores. Dominant species within the complex include white spruce, birch and balsam poplar. In places where trees cannot survive, high brush predominates; primary species include alder and willow. Temperate, spruce-dominated coastal forests cover a few drainages in the northeastern part of the park, while snow fields and bare rock, are found at the highest elevations in the Aleutian Range. The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, along with some adjacent areas, is also largely unvegetated, it being overlain with volcanic ash and rock. [6]

Because of the diversity of habitats found in Katmai, the park supports an abundance of animal life. Biologists have recorded at least six species of marine mammals, 29 species of land mammals, 137 bird species, 24 species of freshwater fishes and four anadromous fish species. Of chief interest to the visitor and park manager are the large mammals and game fishes. Caribou, for instance, inhabit portions of the western end of the park, and moose and brown bear have been found in many sections of the park. Bear roam even onto the mountain slopes. The lakes, particularly those at the lower elevations, teem with sockeye salmon, rainbow and lake trout, Dolly Varden trout, grayling, steelhead, northern pike and other fishes. Chum salmon are found in streams draining into Shelikof Strait. [7]

Climate and Weather

The weather, not surprisingly, differs dramatically in the various parts of the park. In the western portion, temperatures are relatively mild; at Brooks Camp, for instance, summer

high temperatures average 63° F., while lows average 44° F. The weather is predominantly cloudy or partly cloudy. In the wintertime, average high temperatures drop to 18.5° F., while winter lows drop to an average of -2.8° F. Winds are generally moderate; in the Brooks Camp area, however, summer winds are often sufficiently strong as to prevent airplane landings.

No long-term weather stations have been established at other points in the park. Park managers, concessioners, and others familiar with Katmai, however, unanimously agree that the weather on Shelikof Strait is poorer than that on the lee side of the Aleutian Range. Precipitation levels and winds along the coast are consistently higher, and the number of cloudy days are greater than at Brooks Camp. Summer temperatures are probably cooler along the coast than at Brooks Camp, and although winter temperatures are probably warmer, winds may make wind-chill readings there more severe. Conditions at points in the Aleutian Range zone are even worse than along Shelikof Strait. Cool temperatures, wind, clouds and precipitation are the rule rather than the exception. [8]

Cultural Diversity

A variety of phenomena attract tourists to the area. For more than 50 years, sport fishers have been attracted to the streams adjacent to the various large lakes in the western portion of the park, where trout and salmon abound; more recently, the area's reputation as a sport fishing Mecca has become even more widely established, and fly-in fishers now visit lakes and streams throughout the park. Another major attraction is the park's remarkable brown bear population. Several hundred coastal brown bears inhabit the park, and visitors flock to Brooks Camp and other sites in hopes of seeing and photographing these magnificent beasts. Thousands of tourists each year are attracted to the devastated landscape associated with the Novarupta volcanic eruption; this cataclysmic event, which took place in June 1912, initiated geological interest in the area and resulted in President Woodrow Wilson proclaiming the area as Katmai National Monument in September 1918. The Brooks Camp area is becoming increasingly well known for its remarkable archeological resources; recent investigations have revealed that a village of substantial proportions has existed, perhaps continuously, for more than six thousand years, and the NPS, in recognition of that importance, has carefully reconstructed and exhibited a nearby semi-subterranean house. Finally, the Katmai country's sheer size and sweep has made it increasingly attractive to those who love wilderness, because few other areas, in Alaska or elsewhere, can promise such scenic and biotic diversity in an area that seems so apparently pristine. (Almost 3.5 million acres of the 4.1 million-acre park and preserve is a Congressionally-designated wilderness. The NPS, after an exhaustive public process, has recommended that almost 300,000 additional acres be declared wilderness, and most of the remaining acreage in the park is a de facto wilderness.)

Despite the region's appeal as a wilderness preserve, cultural resource specialists recognize that Katmai has a long, complex cultural history. The Brooks Camp area, as noted above, has been a major locus of human activity for thousands of years, and archeologists have discovered scores if not hundreds of additional sites along Katmai's rivers, lakeshores, and coastline that reveal evidence of prehistoric occupation. Oral traditions and historical journals indicate that several prehistoric trade routes crisscrossed the area; in more recent times, those trails were followed by Russian priests, Nome-bound gold miners, U.S. government geologists, and other travelers. Those who followed in their wake spread out across the Katmai country building fisheries facilities, trapping cabins and traplines, fox farms, tourist camps, and other improvements. These historic properties, to be sure, occupy only a minuscule portion of the park. These sites, structures, and buildings, however, tell a poignant story about the area's people, their activities, their lifestyle, and their culture.

Katmai Properties Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Currently, there are nine properties located within Katmai National Park and Preserve that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Several of these listings have prehistoric significance. Five of these sites are also important for their use as settlements or smaller occupation sites during the early historic time period which ended in 1912. Fure's Cabin is listed for its historic significance as related to a trapping lifestyle.

Northwest of the Aleutian Range:

Brooks River Archaeological District (AHRS Site No. XMK-051). [9] Listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1993. Important for both prehistoric and historic time periods.

Old Savonoski (XMK-001). Important for both prehistoric and historic time periods.

Savonoski River Archaeological District (XMK-053). Prehistoric significance.

Fure's Cabin (XMK-050). Historic significance.

Along the Coast:

Archaeological Site 49 MK 10 (XMK-049), near Dakavak Bay. Prehistoric significance.

Takli Island Archaeological District (XMK-052). Prehistoric significance.

Kukak Village (XMK-006). Important for both prehistoric and historic time periods.

Archaeological Site 49 AF 3 (AFG-001), near Cape Chiniak. Prehistoric significance.

Kaguyak Village (AFG-043). Important for both prehistoric and historic time periods.

Endnotes

¹ Unless otherwise specified, the term "park" will refer to all of the area within both Katmai National Park and Katmai National Preserve.

² NPS, *The National Parks: Index 1997-1999* (Washington, GPO), 1997. By way of contrast, the two largest national parks in the Lower 48 states are Death Valley (3,367,628 acres) and Yellowstone (2,219,791 acres).

³ For a brief description of natural resources in the old (pre-1978) Katmai National Monument, see John A. Hussey, *Embattled Katmai* (San Francisco, NPS, August 1971), 1-13; for a more lengthy description, see Victor Cahalane, *A Biological Survey of Katmai National Monument* (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution), 1959.

⁴ Alaska Planning Group, *Final Environmental Statement (FES), Proposed Katmai National Park, Alaska*, 1974, 37; Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 6.

⁵ APG, *FES, Katmai*, 37.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

⁷ Louis R. Huber, "Flight to Katmai," *Alaska Sportsman* 16 (April, 1951), 40; Frank Dufresne, "Katmai Adventure," *Field and Stream* 56 (February 1952), 42; APG, *FES*, *Katmai*, 53, 57, 61.

⁸ APG, *FES*, *Katmai*, 32.

⁹ These letters and numbers are from the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey, which is part of the state inventory system that is maintained by the State Historic Preservation Office, Office of History and Archaeology.

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CHAPTER 2:

EARLY KATMAI PEOPLE

AT THE BEGINNING of the historic period (ca. 1760), the northern Alaska Peninsula people were living in the interior, east of Naknek Lake, and along the Katmai coast with key settlements at Katmai, Kukak, and Savonoski. The people occupied seasonal camps as well. To some degree, this was the continuation of earlier habitation patterns. People have been living in the Katmai region for thousands of years. Archaeological excavations along the Brooks River indicate that people were living in the area, at least on a seasonal basis, almost continuously since 4,500 years ago. Other habitation sites, dating to less than 500 years ago, have been found along the Savonoski River and at Lake Grosvenor.

Archaeological investigations in the southeast section of the park reveal that human occupation began as early as 6,000 years ago on Takli Island. Other habitation sites that include house pits have been found along the shoreline of Shelikof Strait, including (from south to north) Dakavak Bay, Kafliia Bay, Kukak Bay, Cape Chiniak, and Kaguyak. Evidence at most of these sites indicates occupation dates more recent than 1,000 years ago.

When the Russians set foot on the Alaska Peninsula coast, there were two groups of people living in the region: 1) the Savonoski people living east of Naknek Lake in several small settlements and 2) the Sugpiat/Alutiiq living along the coast. The following is a brief introduction to the Native Katmai people as well as an explanation of the terms selected for use in this study.

Savonoski People

The multi-village complex located east of the Iliuk Arm of Naknek Lake was known in the Alaska Russian Orthodox Church records variously as Severnovsk, Ikhiak, Ikhagmiut, Nanmiut, and Kanigamiut. [1] The people also lived in semi-subterranean houses, constructed from local cottonwood and spruce logs. Like the coastal Sugpiat/Alutiiq, the Savonoski people maintained a community house called a *kazhim* or *qasgiq*. [2] They established seasonal camps and subsisted primarily on salmon, caribou, and bear.

The native word(s) for the people living around the eastern Naknek Lake region is unknown. The Russians called the villages Severnovsk or Severnovskoe settlements and the inhabitants the *Severnovskie Aleuty* or *Severnovsk Aleuts*. The inhabitant's ethnic and linguistic affinity is not clear. While the

literature shows inconsistent references to Savonoski's population as either predominately Aglurmiut or Sugpiat/Alutiiq, there are a few other clues. The Russian application of the term Severnovskie, which means "northerners," explains that these were the northernmost "Aleut"

(meaning Alutiiq or Sugpiat) speakers. This makes sense as the people maintained strong trading ties with Katmai village from pre-contact times through 1912. The people preferred to take the more strenuous route over Katmai Pass instead of the easier Naknek River route to the settlement of Paugvik. Paugvik was the main Aglurmiut settlement during the Russian period; located near the mouth of the Naknek River and about sixty-two miles from Savonoski. There are stories of hostility between the Savonoski and Paugvik people, which could account for their limited interaction. Some anthropologists believe that during the late 1700s, the Savonoski people were displaced by the Aglurmiut from the lower Naknek River drainage. [3]

The Savonoski people had connections with Douglas, a village located on the coast and at the end of a portage route from Bristol Bay. [4] The Savonoski people along with some Katmai villagers contributed to the Douglas settlement's population. [5] There were some linguistic differences between the people of Katmai and Savonoski; however, as Spurr noted from his 1898 visit, there was a "marked difference in the speech." [6] Dumond and VanStone concluded that the Savonoski people, and those of Ugashik, were "native speakers of some form of Alutiiq...and they contrasted with the Central Yupik Aglurmiut of Paugvik." [7] Morseth suggests that the Severnovskie people, like the Ugashik people, spoke some form or dialect on the language continuum between Central Yup'ik and Sugtestun. [8]

During the early American period, the village located near Iluik Arm of Naknek Lake became known as Savonoski. [9] This Americanized spelling was placed on maps and it fell into general use. For purposes of this study, Savonoski will be used to provide continuity about the village's population and geographic location as it has been known in recent generations.

The Coastal Sugpiat/Alutiiq

The Sugpiat/Alutiiq inhabitants lived along the Shelikof Strait in settlements at Katmai, Kukak, and probably further north, and established seasonal camps as well. It is believed that village locations were selected in relation to an adequate wood supply used for building houses and boats and for heating purposes. The people built semi-subterranean houses, which were built partially in the ground, supported by wooden posts and had log



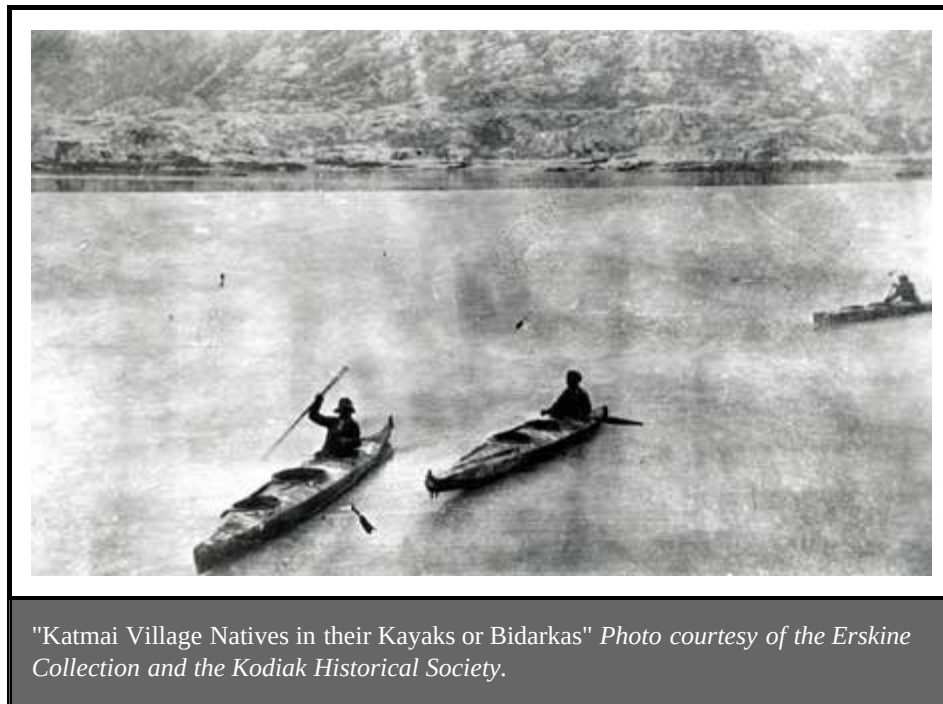
The Brooks River barabara is a reconstruction of the original prehistoric house depression dated to A.D. 1200 to 1300. Based on the work of archeologist Don Dumond, the dwelling was left in skeletal form for visitors to see into the interior. It is located at Brooks Camp. *NPS photo.*

cribbed roofs. The structures were then covered with mud and sod. [10] The coastal Natives had a land and sea subsistence orientation. They were, however, skilled sea mammal hunters using kayaks and dart weapons.

The Sugpiat/Alutiiq were related to the Kodiak Island people, [11] as Langsdorff noted in his 1805 visit to Kukak:

The customs, habits and, in part, the clothing, even the language of the inhabitants of Alaksa [Alaska Peninsula], are the same as in Kodiak. Only in food is there a noticeable difference, since the peninsula is connected to America where there are quantities of reindeer and wild sheep. The inhabitants usually hunt them in the fall for use as food and clothing. [12]

Various terms have been applied to the upper Alaska Peninsula people. The Russians applied the generic term Aleut, as well as the more specific Aliaskentsky and Aliaskan. Additional terms that have been used include Koniag, Kaniaga, Kad'iak Aleuts, Pacific Eskimo, and Pacific Yup'ik. Native speakers pronounced the term Aleut as Alutiiq, with Alutiiqs (an Anglicized plural) being the term which many contemporary descendants use today. The early people are considered to be Sugtestun speakers. The pluralized word Sugpiat (meaning "the real people") was the term traditionally used and has recently gained popularity. [13] For purposes of this study, Sugpiat/Alutiiq will be used to indicate some continuity in language, ethnic, and cultural heritage of the upper Alaska Peninsula inhabitants.



Prehistoric Properties Listed on the National Register

Eight of the early habitation sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and are significant for what they tell us about Katmai's prehistoric occupants.

Brooks River Archaeological District (AHRS Site No. XMK-051). Listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1993.

Old Savonoski (XMK-001).

Savonoski River Archaeological District (XMK-053).

Archaeological Site 49 MK 10 (XMK-049), near Dakavak Bay.

Takli Island Archaeological District (XMK-052).

Kukak Village (XMK-006).

Archaeological Site 49 AF 3 (AFG-001), near Cape Chiniak.

Kaguyak Village (AFG-043).

Endnotes

¹ Dumond, Don E., *Demographic Effects of European Expansion: A Nineteenth-Century Native Population of the Alaska Peninsula*, 16.

² Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 74.

³ Dumond and VanStone, "Paugvik," 2-3, 6. Dumond and VanStone also noted that the Paugvik Aglurmiut traded at Katmai.

⁴ Hussey, 233, citing Petroff's Report, *Tenth Census*, 1883.

⁵ *Russian Orthodox American Messenger* 2(17):508-509, 1898, translated by Richard Bland, May 1999.

⁶ Spurr, *A Reconnaissance in Southwestern Alaska in 1898*, 1900, 93.

⁷ Dumond and VanStone, "Paugvik," 4.

⁸ Morseth, *The People of the Volcanoes*, 65.

⁹ Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 252. Hussey noted J.E. Spurr's report of his 1898 trip through the area that the name for the village located at the head of Naknek Lake "is Ikkhagamut, or Savonoski, as it is now commonly called."

¹⁰ Hussey, *Embattled Katmai*, 60-61.

¹¹ Morseth, *The People of the Volcanoes*, 10, noted that the term Qikertarmiut refers to Sugpiat people affiliated with Kodiak Island.

¹² Langsdorff, *Remarks and Observations on a Voyage Around the World*, 140.

¹³ Morseth, *The People of the Volcanoes*, 5.

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Katmai

Building in an Ashen Land: Historic Resource Study



CHAPTER 3:

RUSSIAN AND EARLY AMERICAN INFLUENCE

Russian Period (1760-1867)

AT THE TIME OF CONTACT with the Russians, the Katmai Native inhabitants were living in settlements along the coast at Katmai and Kukak, and in the interior, northwest of Katmai, around the eastern region of Naknek Lake, at the multi-villages that came to be known as the Savonoski settlements. By the mid-1780s, the Russian fur traders had incorporated the Alaska Peninsula Sugpiat/Alutiiq along Shelikof Strait and, a short time later, the interior Savonoski people into their fur hunting and trading network. The Russian-American Company (RAC) established a hunting and fur trading station at Katmai and constructed several buildings and structures, including a Russian Orthodox chapel. Katmai remained the significant RAC post along the Shelikof Strait coast throughout this period.

Russian Expansion into the Katmai Region

Beginning in the 1760s, the Russian fur hunters (*promyshlenniki*) moved eastward from the Aleutians into the Kodiak and upper Alaska Peninsula areas. The Russians were eager to incorporate the Native people, who lived on Kodiak Island and across Shelikof Strait, into their fur hunting and trading activities. The Russians knew little about the area except that the Sugpiat/Alutiiq people, like the Aleutian Islands people, were adept at catching sea otters. The pelts were lucrative trade items in China.

Grigorii I. Shelikhov, fur merchant and partner of the Shelikhov-Golikov Company (a precursor to the Russian-American Company), sought to establish a permanent settlement on Kodiak Island from which he could expand his fur hunting activity and the Russian colonization of America. Beginning in the 1760s, the Kodiak Islanders resisted the Russians through a series of armed conflicts that lasted for twenty years. [1] The Russians pushed ahead to establish posts at Karluk (1785) and Afognak (1786). By 1786, the Russians had subjugated the Native inhabitants into hunting for furs, and continued their expansion into the Alaska Peninsula and southcentral Alaska.

Initially, Russian parties that explored as far as Kamishak Bay in the winter of 1785-1786 reported no difficulties in carrying on their trading activities with the area Natives. [2] In May 1786, Shelikhov wrote to his chief manager about stationing crews across the strait from Kodiak Island on the Alaska Peninsula, "These men should be kept in artels [3] [crews] 20 at Katmak [Katmai] and 11 between Katmak and Kamyshek, closer to Katmak, in the village." The summer settlement of Kukak was most likely the other place to which he referred. [4] It took several years, however, for the Alaska Peninsula artels to be established. Up until the summer of 1791, the area inhabitants had succeeded in keeping the Russians from settling among them. [5] In the meantime, Shelikhov's outfit established

Fort Alexandrovsk (1786) on the Kenai Peninsula. Shelikhov's fierce competitor, the Lebedev-Lastochkin fur trading company, established a post on the Kenai Peninsula that same year. Their rivalry resulted in hostilities breaking out on several occasions among the company hunters. Those hostilities involved the Natives who worked and traded with them.

This rivalry intensified until the late 1790s when Aleksandr Baranov, then chief director for the Shelikhov-Golikov Company's American interest, succeeded in overcoming rival Russian traders, notably the Lebedev-Lastochkin Company, for control of the fur trade. In 1789, Shelikhov-Golikov established its headquarters at Kodiak, which became the major fur depot for the region. With its permanent base at Kodiak, the company spread onto the mainland and beyond. In 1799, the Russian Czar, Paul I, authorized a charter that granted monopoly of the American fur trade to the newly formed Russian-American Company (RAC). Baranov later became head of the company and the RAC monopolized the Alaskan fur trade through the end of the Russian period.

The Katmai Artel

The RAC organized hunting crews and workers into artels or into the smaller *odinochkas* (one man posts). A *baidarschik* (crew chief) headed each artel and passed along the manager's orders to their crews. [6] Shelikhov's instructions for constructing buildings and structures to support the artels included,

when possible build the company's buildings according to my plans. They must be made out of logs or in the form of dugouts where there is not enough timber. For native workers and for other natives who might come on business or for a visit, build special yurts [a driftwood hut or dugout dwelling] about 100 sazhen [approx. 700 feet] from the fort and the company's buildings. Always keep a two year supply of local food products in dry barabaras for Russians, native workers and hostages. Have a large and unheated barn in which to keep baidaras, baidarkas and dried fish. Have nets for each work crew, good wooden baidaras, and a supply of lavtaks [skins] for baidarkas. [7]

Katmai was a logical choice for the RAC to set up a post as the nearby Native population provided a source of labor for fur hunting activities. Katmai also had strong trading ties to the upper Naknek Lake area, including the Savonoski villages, and to the Bristol Bay region. [8] In the early 1800s, Davydov noted that "The baidarshchik in Kakmaisk [Katmai] receives by barter animal pelts from the North and from the hinterland of Aliaska." [9]

During the early 1790s, the Russians established a hunting party and trading post at Katmai which was considered an *odinochka* by 1794. [10] The post was active by 1795, when it was noted that "The hostages from Karluk, taken in pacifying the inhabitants are kept in the Katmai artel in Aliaksa." [11]

The RAC soon expanded Katmai into an artel that was located away from the coast, "up the river, between lakes, on a plain." [12] The RAC established its second artel along the Alaska Peninsula before 1799 at Sutkhum, located on Sutwik Island 130 miles southwest from Katmai. The posts were established because "A good situation, dependable weather, succulent grass and plenty of fish and land and marine animals persuaded Mr. Baranov to establish settlements in two places on Aliaska [Peninsula]." [13] For a length of time, Katmai reflected the type of buildings and structures constructed in some of the Kodiak artels. This was part of Shelikhov's plan to create an agricultural base in the region, as well as to gather furs. As an 1821 description makes clear,

Katmai artel on the south coast of the Alaska Peninsula. Two Russians. Rather good buildings: a house, barracks, warehouse, shop, barns, etc. Over 20 head of cattle. They did some fishing ("they prepared fish"), trapped sea otters, and bought from the natives furs of river beavers, foxes, deer, bears [14]

By the 1830s, the Katmai and Sutkhum posts were downsized. As Khlebnikov noted,

Cattle raising was established successfully in the Katmai artel, but it has been reduced due to a shortage of men. There are very many red foxes of very good quality. There are natives only near the Katmai artel. Company buildings in both places were originally extensive, but are now dilapidated...the following are on company maintenance: in Katmai - one Russian; in the two combined = Aleuts 10 males and two females and one Russian released from service. [15]

Other Settlements and Places

Throughout the Russian period and for several decades of the American period, settlements continued along the coast at Katmai, Kukak, and in the interior at Savonoski. There were additional settlements and seasonal camps, as has been indicated by documented visits, surveys, maps and the Alaska Russian Orthodox Church records.

The Russians continually sought out new sites as quickly as they depleted the fur resources. In 1786 Shelikhov instructed his chief manager at Kodiak to gather information about locations, resources, people, settlements, and Native place names in the region including the upper Alaska Peninsula. [16] The Russian hunters gained first hand experience about the Alaska Peninsula through hunting and trading expeditions. Decades later, trained Russian naval officers supplied accurate charts and maps.

During the 1780s, the Katmai coast received few non-Russian visitors. In 1786, however, Captain John Meares in his British trading ship *Nootka* sailed through Shelikof Strait. This voyage recorded new geographical knowledge about the area, including the fact that Kodiak Island was separated from the mainland by the strait. Meares also documented Russian fur trading taking place around Amalik Bay or Kaflia Bay. In this area, Meares' ship was met by a Russian in a canoe who told him that the Russians were established on Kodiak Island. [17]

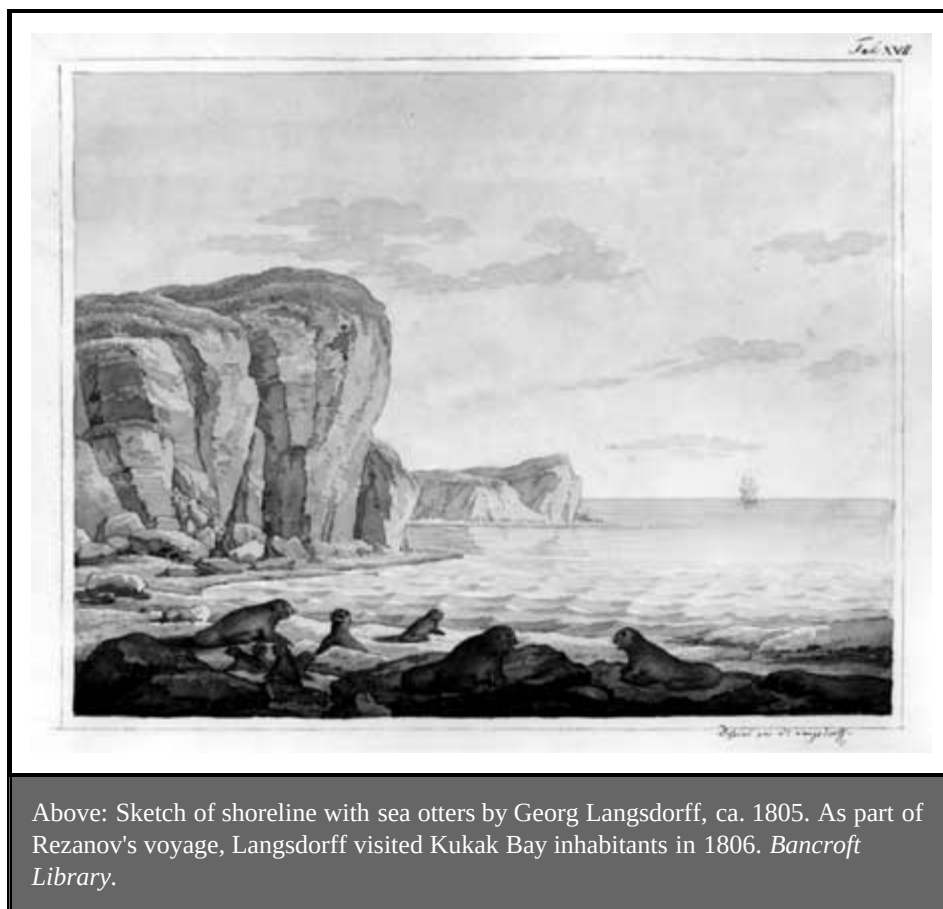
During the 1790s, Baranov sent out various detachments of *promyshlenniks* on exploring ventures. One, the Medvednikov-Kashevarov 1797 expedition, confirmed the location of Iliamna Lake and the various portage routes across the Alaska Peninsula. [18] The Lebedev-Lastochkin Company, however, was already familiar with the area, having established an artel at Iliamna. [19]

The first map that combined the earliest Russian knowledge about the upper Alaska Peninsula is dated 1802. The map shows Katmai along with an illegible name at the location marked on modern maps as Kaguyak. [20]

Kukak Village, although not identified on the above map, was known by the Russians and singled out in the 1795 and 1804 censuses. [21] In 1806, the first ship stopped at Kukak Bay's "inner" harbor. Dr. Georg Heinrich von Langsdorff, a German physician and naturalist with Rezanov's voyage, visited inhabitants from the "Village of Toujajak." Although it is not clear if "Toujajak" was Kukak Village or a separate seasonal camp, Langsdorff provided a description of his visit to the "native summer huts" located on the northeastern shore of the bay:

The inhabitants gave us a very friendly reception in their small earthen-covered hut with grass growing all over the outside and an entrance that was so low and narrow that we could only crawl in hunched over. Everyone sat around a fire burning in the middle of the hut. A kettle of fish was hanging over it. Several small salmon, spitted upon sticks stuck in the earth around the fire, were being roasted. Opposite the door, the floor was covered with fine, dry wood shavings and several clean seal skins, where we were asked to sit. [22]

By the early 1800s, the RAC sent expeditions across the Aleutian Range and into the interior. The Savonoski people, who lived in the multivillage community located just east of Naknek Lake, were in contact with the Russian traders at least by 1807, when a marriage was registered that year for a Russian *promyshlennyi* from the "Severnovskoe settlement." [23]



The Savonoski people also had several seasonal camps in the area, as twentieth century archeological investigations show habitation sites used at least seasonally during the Russian period near Savonoski River, Grosvenor, and Coville lakes as well as at Brooks River. Most of these sites continued to be used in the Early American period, some even after the 1912 volcanic eruption. [24]

Petr Korsakovskiy's 1818 expedition, from Kodiak to Katmai, across the Alaska Peninsula and into the Iliamna region, highlighted the RAC's need for information about Alaska's southwest interior. Korsakovskiy's expedition resulted in the RAC establishing Alexandrovski Redoubt (1818-1846) at the mouth of the Nushagak River. During the Russian time period, the Aglurmiut village of Paugvik, located at the mouth of the Naknek River, was the primary settlement in the area. [25]

In 1818, the RAC's Katmai jurisdiction probably included six settlements located on the

upper Alaska Peninsula: two Savonoski settlements, Katmai, Kukak, Naushkak and Ugashek (the latter located over 100 miles southwest of Katmai and outside of today's park boundaries). The Katmai jurisdiction inventory for that year listed a total population of 837 people. [26] Little is known about Naushkak: the settlement is mentioned in the Alaska Russian Orthodox Church Records, it was located north of Kukak (possibly near Cape Nukshak) and it is believed to have been occupied on a permanent or seasonal basis into the 1850s. [27]

Between 1827 and 1836 the shoreline of the entire Alaska Peninsula was carefully surveyed. Ivan F. Vasiliev's 1831-32 surveys charted the coast from Cape Douglas south to Chignik Bay. From these surveys, Vasiliev reported the Native designation "Kukak" for an "Eskimo" village located four miles southwest of Langsdorff's "Toujajak Village." Vasiliev also provided the name "Kafliia" and reported the name "Akulogak" for Naknek Lake. [28]

In 1827 Captain A.J. von Krusenstern did not personally visit the Katmai region, but he compiled names from other maps that included "Katmay" (Katmai), "Baie Katmay (Katmai Bay), "P[orte] Aiou (Hallo Bay), C[ap] Noughchack (Cape Nukshak), and C[ap] Ighiack (Cape Ugyak). Captain Feodor Petroviche Lutke's 1836 chart included place names of "Kaiayakak" (Kaguyak) and Swikshak Bay, as well as Naknek Lake and Naknek River. [29]

Changes Brought to the Katmai Settlements

The Russian-American Company's fur hunting and trading practices and the Russian Orthodox Church's (ROC) mission activities brought different influences to the Katmai region inhabitants. The RAC initially incorporated the Native people into their fur trading activities primarily through coercive means. The Sugpiat/Alutiiq people were considered "dependent" and had to work directly for the RAC in the sea otter hunting and trading activities. The *promyshlenniki* used the same methods of conscripting labor and holding hostages as they had with the Aleutian people to force the Sugpiat/Alutiiq to gather the sea otter furs. The Savonoski people had less contact and were considered "semi-dependent," meaning that their relationship with the Russians traders was more independent. [30]

As part of the Russian system's relationship with its "dependents", the RAC selected community leaders called *toions* from among the Sugpiat/Alutiiq. The *toions* had limited authority over certain community and public matters and were expected to be good examples in living their lives according to the ROC dictates. [31] The RAC also required dependents to get permission to visit neighboring islands, thereby controlling the movement of the coastal Katmai people throughout this time.

The RAC Kodiak District organized, provided provisions of food, clothing, and boats, and sent out large sea otter hunting parties during the summer. Under the eye of the Russian overseer, groups of hunters dispersed to their assigned hunting areas where they established base camps and set up temporary shelters of driftwood to store their food and equipment. In a traditional hunting process, the hunters worked together using their baidarkas to encircle the sea otter and used their dart weapons to kill it. The Sugpiat/Alutiiq hunters were part of the sea otter hunting parties that operated along the coast from Kamishak Bay to the Sutkhum odinochka (at or near Sutwik Island). [32] They also joined up with larger contingents, such as the 1805 trek to Nuchek. Some were taken as far away as Sitka, and a few all the way to present-day Fort Ross in California. [33]

The Russian Orthodox Church was the other influential, and to some degree, stabilizing factor in the lives of the Native people. In 1794 the first ROC missionaries arrived and

began baptizing the Alutiiq people on Kodiak Island. Within two years, the first church was built on Kodiak and the missionaries took their religious activities to the Alaska Peninsula, Aleutians, Kenai Peninsula and Yakutat. During the winter of 1797, it was noted that ".Aliaksans came to Kadiak and were baptized." [34] During the first half of the 1800s, the ROC Kodiak parish included the Shelikof Strait and Savonoski settlements.

Certain individuals, including the missionaries, criticized the RAC for its ill treatment of the Native people, which included the practice of taking hunters far away from their homes, and the subsequent depopulation. Langsdorff noted in his 1806 visit to the Kukak area,

most of the young people having been carried away to Sitcha [Sitka] to hunt sea-otters. Of a thousand men who formerly lived in this spot, scarcely more than forty remained, and the whole peninsula of Alaksa they said was depopulated in the same proportion. [35]

The system of forcing Natives into hunting relaxed somewhat after 1818 when Baranov left and new management policies were instituted. The early RAC administration had also often come into conflict with the ROC mission. Greater support for the ROC activities was mandated in the RAC company charters of 1821 and 1844, including provisions that required the company to provide full economic assistance and support to the Church. [36]

Conditions for the Native people at Kodiak do not appear to have improved by the 1830s at which time Ferdinand Wrangell (Chief Manager of RAC from 1830 to 1835) made these observations at Kodiak, which can probably be applied for the Alaska Peninsula,

From spring to autumn all the men able to work are sent off by the company to hunt sea otters and birds. From the autumn until spring they are occupied in land hunting fox and otter, and although this measure is essential for the survival of the company, the islanders gain little through this. By excessively low prices paid them for their produce and fairly high prices for the goods in which they are paid, they are unable to clothe themselves and their families with what is absolutely necessary. they are obliged to purchase both their parkas and kamleias from the company or else earn them in some other way. [37]

Throughout the 1800s, the Katmai villages experienced depopulation as did other settlements throughout the region. Below are population figures to give an idea of changes that occurred during the Russian period. [38]

1792	On Alaska Peninsula	814 (439 M; 375 F)
1800	On Alaska Peninsula	209 (119 M; 90 F)
1818	Katmai Jurisdiction	837 (386 M; 451 F)
(the jurisdiction probably included these six settlements: two at Savonoski plus Katmai, Kukak, Naushkak, and Ugashek)		
1821	On Alaska Peninsula	838 (386 M; 452 F)
1825	On Alaska Peninsula	190 (99 M; 91 F)
1861	Katmai	239 (222 "Aleut"; 17 creole)
(this figure may be for the Katmai jurisdiction)		

Additional figures for the Savonoski settlements [39], comes from the Alaska Russian Orthodox Church records:

1850	99 (48 M; 51 F)
1861	98

Population loss can be attributed to the extreme hunting conditions, subsequent family and community hardships, hunting accidents, and the numerous epidemics that occurred on both sides of the Aleutian Range. Respiratory epidemics occurred throughout Alaska during the 1800s including the Kodiak area. The devastating smallpox epidemic of 1835-1840 reached the Shelikof Strait settlements during 1837-38. Some success at stopping the epidemic was achieved on the Alaska Peninsula by the Katmai baidarschchik Ivan Kostylev. Kostylev and two others managed to vaccinate 243 people from the villages, all of whom survived; 27 people, the ones who had refused to be vaccinated, died. [40] During the years of 1853, 1860, 1859, and 1863 coughing and respiratory epidemics were reported for villages around Naknek Lake. [41]

Following the losses brought on by the epidemics, the Russian-American Company Chief Manager and governor of Russian America, Arvid A. Etholen, consolidated villages on Kodiak Island during the early 1840s. This activity did not occur along the Katmai coast unless it happened on an informal basis. Katmai continued to be the primary fur trading post and population center on the Alaska Peninsula into the early American period. In 1845, the Russians identified Katmai as one of five depots in the Kodiak district for stocking supplies for hunting parties and for trade. [42]

Northeast of Katmai along the coast, Kukak and Naushkak were occupied to at least 1843. These settlements, however, may have been remnant populations following the smallpox epidemic. Since there is so little mention of Naushkak and Kukak in the historical records, it is likely that these places were used on an intermittent, seasonal basis through the Russian period. [43]

The Russian-American Company Builds the First Chapel

The only chapel built on the upper Alaska Peninsula during the Russian period was at Katmai. In 1843, RAC manager Ioann Kostylev built the first chapel. This building was replaced with a new chapel eleven years later. [44]

The RAC Chief Manager Etolin provided instructions about the settlements building chapels:

To Toion who are to become starshinas [elders/church readers] in Aleut settlements in the Kodiak Department. The starshina must be firm in having the Aleut men and women fulfill their Christian obligations and carry out all tasks assigned to them by the priest. Toward this end, each settlement is to try to build a chapel, through its own effort, where the priest can conduct worship services when he visits. They should build the chapel when time and circumstances permit, after the settlement has been organized and put into order. [45]

Russian Orthodox Church activities continued with at least periodic visits to Katmai and Savonoski settlements during the 1840s. At Savonoski, the priest would hold services in a tent, as a chapel was not built there until 1877. During 1841 the Kodiak mission recorded a visit to the peninsula with 57 baptisms at Katmai and 46 baptisms in the Savonoski settlements. [46] In the early 1840s, the ROC reorganized its Kodiak Mission, creating the Nushagak and Kenai missions. In 1844 the Savonoski settlements and records were

transferred to the Nushagak mission, where a small chapel had been constructed in 1832 and its first missionary assigned in 1842. [47] The Savonoski settlements continued to be served by the Nushagak mission until 1912. The Shelikof Strait villages remained under the Kodiak Mission until they were transferred to the Afognak Mission in 1896.

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Katmai

Building in an Ashen Land: Historic Resource Study



CHAPTER 4:

SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITIONS AND RESEARCH

EARLY SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITIONS and researchers were drawn to the Katmai region to study the effects of the 1912 volcanic eruption. From 1915 to 1919, Robert Fiske Griggs led the National Geographic Society's expeditions to Katmai. Their observations and documentation of the area, especially of the fumaroles, led to the creation of the Monument. For the most part, the expedition members set up temporary campsites. They did, however, build two storage cabins at their base camps, one located near Savonoski and the other on the west side of Katmai Bay. Some of the Society members also built rock cairns for surveying purposes. One other building related to scientific research is the Baked Mountain cabin that the University of Alaska's Geophysical Institute built in 1965.

Prior to Russia's sale of its American colonies to the U.S. Government, the scientific world had little interest in the Katmai area. The 1867 purchase of Alaska sparked an interest in knowing more about Alaska's resources, which spurred several investigations led by the Coast Survey and the Smithsonian Institution. The 1895 Becker-Dall expedition is considered to be the first attempt at a systematic investigation of the Alaska Peninsula's mineral resources. This was one of the first U.S. Geological Survey studies in Alaska. [1]

In 1898, the USGS expedition led by geologist Josiah Edward Spurr covered over a thousand miles, which included traveling from the Nushagak to Naknek Lake and on to Katmai. Spurr's report provided the only known geological observations of the Upper Ukak River valley prior to the 1912 eruption. [2]

National Geographic Society Expeditions

In July 1912, the first of several National Geographic Society (NGS) investigations of Alaskan volcanoes began. George C. Martin, a USGS geologist, visited the Katmai coast by stopping at Douglas; he did not, however, venture inland. [3] The following year, NGS botanist Robert F. Griggs traveled to Kodiak to study revegetation of the ash deposits. [4] An independent exploration by William A. Hesse, of Cordova, and Mel A. Horner, of Seward, also occurred in 1913. That summer the two men made a reconnaissance of the Katmai area and were close enough to the edge of the volcanic district to convince Griggs upon their return that they had gotten a glimpse of thousands of small fumaroles. [5]

Between 1915 and 1919, the National Geographic Society sponsored five scientific expeditions to the Katmai area. Robert Fiske Griggs led four of these trips. Griggs, a Ph.D. from Harvard University, spent a great portion of thirty years devoted to exploring, promoting and protecting Katmai National Monument. As NPS historian John A. Hussey has summarized, "It is safe to say that during that period, no other man so greatly influenced the course of events in that vast scenic and scientific wonderland." [6]

The goal of the 1915 National Geographic Society expedition was to make a

reconnaissance of the country west of Shelikof Strait. Griggs and two companions sailed from Kodiak to Katmai Bay. They visited Katmai village and noted the effects of the ash, pumice and the Katmai River flood on the buildings and structures. Their explorations took them to the lower slope of the Aleutian Range, from which they viewed the line of volcanoes including Martin, Mageik, Trident, and Katmai.

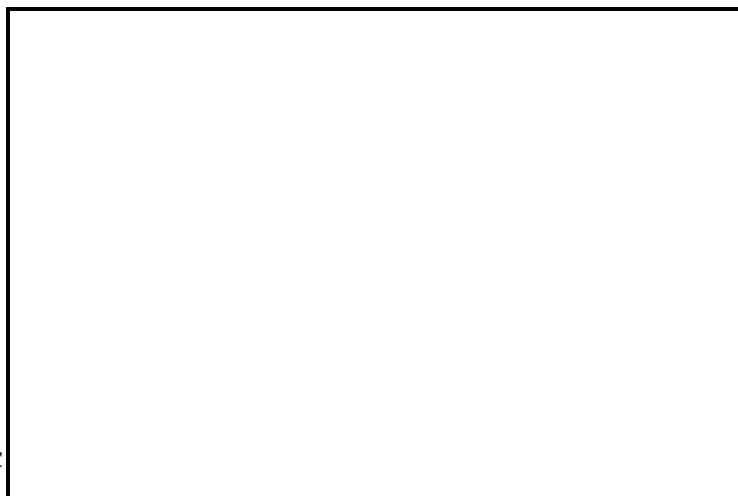


"The party of 1915 at Katmai Village." From left to right: Robert F. Griggs; L.G. Folsom, Kodiak teacher; and B.B. Fulton, entomologist. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 1, 3785.*

The following year, Griggs led an expedition of four men back to the Katmai mainland. One of the group members was Walter Metrokin, a one-handed bear hunter from Kodiak. They set up a base camp near Katmai Village. This expedition was significant for the discovery and documentation of fumaroles in the valley west of Katmai Pass. As Griggs recalled,

Even from this hasty examination we were able to make on the day of discovery, we could see that the vents must be counted by the tens of thousands. And from this first impression came the name, The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. [7]

Griggs summarized his belief about the area. "I recognized at once, that the Katmai district must be made a great national park accessible to all the people, like the Yellowstone. To make it known, to have it set aside as a National Park, and to secure the means necessary for its development would, I foresaw, require a tremendous amount of effort." [8] This expedition provided the first purely scientific



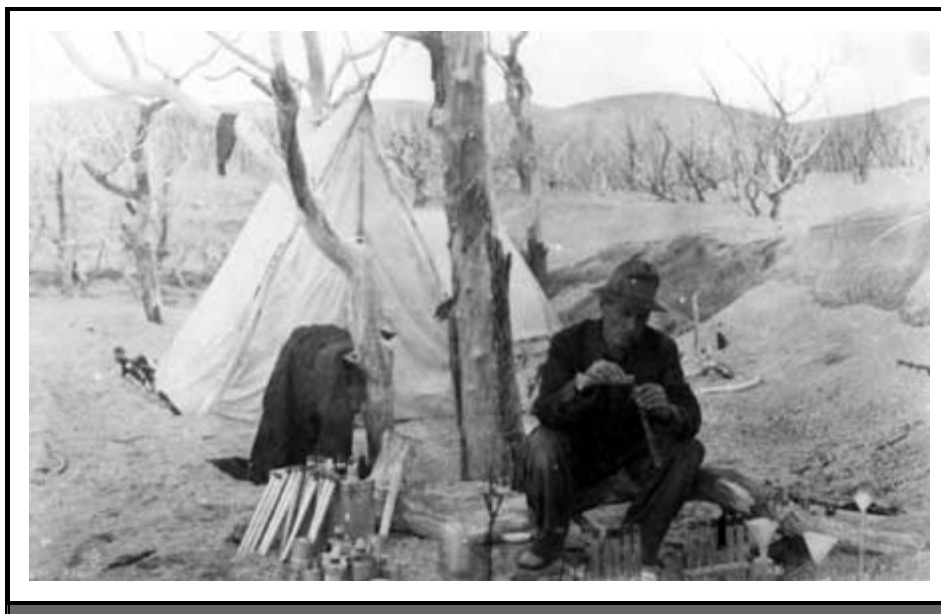
writings from observations made at Katmai.

The 1917 NGS Katmai investigation consisted of ten men and included a chemist, a zoologist, a topographer, and two assistant botanists. The men focused their scientific efforts on the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. A base camp was set up at on the west side of Katmai Bay, with supplies being transported across the lagoon. Goods were then carried over the south side of Katmai River and on up to the pass. They set up three subsidiary base camps on the western side of Katmai Pass and established a system of relay camps. The spent a month on the west side of Katmai Pass and traveled as far north as the end of the ash flow (which was almost to Savonoski). [9] The thousands of fumaroles were an awe-inspiring sight; as expedition member James S. Hine, a zoologist, commented,

Having reached the summit of Katmai Pass, the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes spreads out before one with no part of the view obstructed. My first thought was: We have reached the modern inferno. I was horrified, and yet, curiosity to see all at close range captivated me. Although sure that at almost every step I would sink beneath the earth's crust into a chasm intensely hot, I pushed on as soon as I found myself safely over a particularly dangerous-appearing area. I didn't like it, and yet I did. [10]



Photograph of fumarole at north angle of Baked Mountain, 1917. Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 2, 1172.



"Chemical laboratory" near Trident Volcano, 1917. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 2, 1172.*

The work of 1917 provided material for the report that led President Woodrow Wilson to proclaim Katmai a National Monument on September 24, 1918.

The 1918 summer expedition consisted of only two men, Jasper D. Sayre and Paul R. Hagelbarger. They journeyed from Seward via the steamship *Dora* to Naknek and then up the river to the eastern end of Naknek Lake. Their goal was to study whether the fumaroles were as active as before and to ascertain the fumaroles' temperatures as well as to survey the area for a topographic map. While in the Naknek Lake area, Sayre and Hagelbarger visited the former Savonoski settlement and also built a rock cairn at or near the summit of Dumpling Mountain for use as a survey reference point. The men explored the foot of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, the slopes of Mageik and hiked over to Novarupta. They took back the first accurate temperatures of the fumaroles.



The National Geographic Society Katmai expedition members built rock cairns to use as survey reference points. This photo is titled "Station 24," which is believed to have been at or near the summit of Dumpling Mountain, 1918. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 4, 3614.*

The largest NGS Katmai expedition occurred in 1919. That summer, Sayre and three of Griggs' students traveled with the bulk of the supplies to Bristol Bay with the assistance of Naknek Packing Company boats, then ascended Naknek River and crossed to the east end of Naknek Lake. Soon after arriving, they set up a base camp, named "Savonoski." The camp was located on the southern shore of Iliuk Arm, about a mile west of the Ukak River, among a few surviving black spruce. The camp consisted of several 12' x 16' mosquito-proof tents. They also built a rectangular shaped cabin, measuring 14' x 16,' with local hewn spruce logs and covered it with a metal roof. This was used for storing their provisions and supplies. [\[11\]](#)





"Savonoski Camp" with motorcycle, tents, and "kitchen", 1919. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 6, 5658.*



Building the cabin at Savonoski Camp, 1919. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 6, 5658.*

In the meantime, Griggs led the rest of the party from Kodiak to the Katmai coast. Newcomers to the expedition included two chemists and a petrologist from the Geophysical Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution. [12] They set up the Lagoon base camp located on the western side of Katmai Bay and built a storage cabin using plywood boards. [13] Since they could not live off the devastated land, the group had to bring in all their supplies. [14] They established a series of relay camps across the peninsula by which they transported their supplies by backpacks.

As Griggs explained the process,

We would proceed half a day's march from our base, then establish a new camp at the terminus, returning each night to the starting point, until enough provisions had been accumulated to permit another move forward. In this way the packers drew their sustenance altogether from the rear camp, leaving the

advance supplies intact for future use. [15]



Above: Party preparing to leave Lagoon Camp, 1919. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 6, 6254X.*



Above: Climbing up the moraine on the way to Katmai Pass, 1919. The expedition carried guns as protection against the many bears who Griggs noted were drawn to the area, "...They [the bears] were not satisfied with merely crossing through the steaming areas, but were apparently attracted in some degree by the Smokes. Their tracks were often to be found close around the largest vents, even far up toward the head of the Valley, many miles from any possible source of food." (*The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes*, 223); Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 5, 5061.

The base camps were, in a relative sense, more elaborate setups that included larger tents and the building of two cabins. For the most part, the other camps consisted of canvas pup tents supported by walking sticks or rifles, although at least a portion of a cabin was built at Ukak Camp. The expedition members also made use of local prospectors' or trappers' cabins around Naknek Lake, and they used a rock cave in Geographic Harbor for shelter as well. [16]



Baked Mountain Camp with Mount Martin in the background, 1919. Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 5, 5061.

The Baked Mountain Camp was no doubt one of the expedition's toughest places for a campsite because of ferocious windstorms. The crew was blown out several times, and prior to the final storm they attempted to reinforce the tents. As Griggs noted,

The frame of the grub tent had been strengthened by a multiplicity of poles and braces sunk deep in the ground until it formed a veritable cage, inside of which we had patched together parts of four tents. Fully a thousand feet of cord had been used in lashing the structure together.

All the guys were anchored to boulders as big as a man could roll, deeply buried in the ground. On every side except the front there were at least two thicknesses of cloth to protect us from flying pumice. A heavy duck tarpaulin had been thrown over the second tent and buried in the ground on the windward side, to reduce its resistance and prevent the wind from getting in under the eaves.

Despite their efforts, a storm blew through, shredding their tents and snapping poles until the five men were left huddling together in the grub tent with sharp pumice stones raining down. They eventually managed to walk out of the area and down to the Ukak Camp although Griggs, for one, was literally picked up and sent flying through the air before the wind dropped him into a gully. [17]

The NGS party provided some basic geographic knowledge about the area. As a member noted about Lake Grosvenor, "That so large a body of water could have remained entirely unknown is significant testimony of how little is known of the geography of the Alaska Peninsula." [18]
The NGS scientific expeditions made

contributions in the fields of volcanology, geology, biology, and other subjects as well.

Later Research Efforts

Other scientific related activities have taken place in the park, although there are no historic properties related to them. During the 1920s-1930s, Father Bernard Rosecrans Hubbard, S.J. made several expeditions into the Katmai region. Hubbard, the famed "Glacier Priest," was a geology professor, explorer, filmmaker, lecturer, and author. In 1929, Hubbard, along with a group of university students and a film crew, successfully entered the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes by way of Katmai Bay and over the pass. In 1932 he made the first wintertime ascent of Mount Katmai. [19]

In 1940 the National Park Service, having recognized the lack of information about Katmai's wildlife, sent biologist Victor Cahalane and Mount McKinley Superintendent Frank Been to Katmai. This was the Service's first concerted effort to have an inventory taken of the area's biological diversity. An additional NPS investigation, with a grant from the Office of Naval Research, took place during 1953-1954; it was known as the Katmai Project. The first year, a team of scientists included geologists, volcanologists, geomorphologists, archeologists, and a geographer, biologist, mammalogist, parasitologist, and entomologist. A surprising determination from the season's research was that Novarupta, not Mount Katmai, was the primary vent of the June 1912 eruption. Additional research done the following season included the finding that the thicker ashfall was located around Novarupta instead of Mount Katmai. This research cinched the conclusion made the previous year. [20]



Strong man stunts, 1919. Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 7, 6414.

Katmai also served as a unique training ground for U.S. astronauts. During the summers of 1965 and 1966, astronauts trained in the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. It was believed that the ashen landscape



In 1917, the NGS expedition noted this "bread-crust bomb on the crater rim of Novarupta." The prevailing belief was that Mount Katmai was the site of the 1912 eruption. 1953 and 1954 NPS field studies, however, determine that the Novarupta vent, located six miles further west, was the real site of the eruption. *Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions Collection, Box 2, 1137.*

was similar to the surface of the moon. [21]

One other building in the park associated with scientific research activity is the Baked Mountain cabin. In 1962, the University of Alaska's Geophysical Institute commenced earthquake research, both seismic and volcanic, in Katmai National Monument. A few years later, Institute personnel wanted to expand their research activities to involve four scientists on the site at a time. To accommodate their housing, the Institute gained permission from NPS to build a field base camp just south of Baked Mountain. In

1965, staff built a 8' x 20' prefabricated plywood residence and workroom along with a 7' x 10' generator hut. The staff also installed two seismometers, one located just north of Baked Mountain and the other just south of the confluence of the Savonoski and Grosvenor rivers. At a later date, a storage shed was constructed at Baked Mountain and a third seismometer was installed in the Geographic Harbor area. [22]

In 1981 the University of Alaska Geophysical Institute established a short-period seismic station at Cape Douglas. In 1988, the station was taken over by the Alaska Volcano Observatory. As of 1992, this was the only AVO-operated seismic station in the park. In 1987, the USGS established an additional 12 seismic stations. In 1993, 16 stations were actively being used to collect data. [23]

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Katmai

Building in an Ashen Land: Historic Resource Study



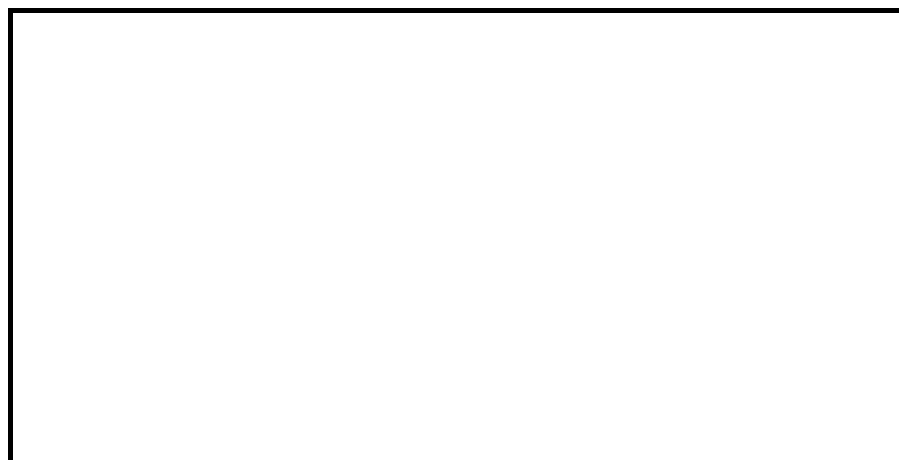
CHAPTER 5: TRANSPORTATION LINKS

TRAVELING IN AND AROUND the Katmai region has long been a formidable task. Weather in the Shelikof Strait, notoriously stormy, has made transportation along the park's eastern coastline difficult both to past and present travelers. Just inland from the coast lies the rugged Aleutian Range, which is broken only occasionally with traversable passes. To the west, the various large lakes ease transportation somewhat; between the lakes and the Bristol Bay coastline, however, most of the major waterways have rapids and other impediments.

Despite all of those obstacles, Katmai's Native peoples used natural geographic corridors to travel across and along the Alaska Peninsula coast. The best known of these routes was the trail that surmounted Katmai Pass; it ran from Katmai Village, on Shelikof Strait, northwest to Iliuk Arm on Naknek Lake. Using kayaks and baidarkas, Native people traveled great distances along the Katmai coast or across the 26-mile Shelikof Strait to travel to Kodiak or Afognak islands.

In later years, Euroamericans patterned their travel with methods similar to those of the Native Americans. Russian fur traders, priests, and explorers sometimes traveled in Native watercraft, while other Euroamericans arrived in ships associated with exploration, fur hunting, and trading activities. Schooners, steamers, fishery tenders, and mailboats all plied the coastal waters. The violent winds and high seas of Shelikof Strait made crossing dangerous and caused numerous shipwrecks and accidents.

More recently, the advent of airplanes has resulted in an increased access to the area and has provided a significant boost to tourism development. Air transportation continues to be critically important today. This dependence on air access is in large part due to the lack of road mileage; the only significant road in the present park, in fact, is a sightseeing road that connects Brooks Camp with the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Properties associated with transportation within Katmai National Park and Preserve include overland trails, a road, one or more shipwrecks, and an airfield.





Sketch by Norman Dawn showing the Katmai Pass route into the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Part of a 1925 motion picture expedition, following in the footsteps of National Geographic Society's Katmai expeditions. Seward Gateway, December 5, 1925.

Trails

Katmai's Native inhabitants used natural overland corridors to traverse the Alaska Peninsula. Groups along the Shelikof Strait traveled inland for seasonal subsistence purposes as well as to trade with the Bristol Bay Natives from whom they obtained walrus tusks for creating fishing hooks and spearheads. The two best known routes were the Hallo Bay and Katmai Pass trails. [1]

The Hallo Bay trail, also referred to as the Douglas Pass trail, led from Naknek Lake eastward up the Savonoski River through the Aleutian Range, then down the Ninagiak River to Hallo Bay. The trail was used throughout the Russian and early American periods. [2] According to Wilbur Davis, who interviewed former Savonoski residents in the early 1950s, the Savonoski people used the Hallo Bay trail to get to the coast:

The people who lived in the lakes area used to go across to the Shelikof Strait

coast to hunt sea otter and gather shellfish. They went across the Hallo Bay pass or Douglas pass, but not the Katmai pass, keeping their kayaks and gear on the coast side. One of their camps was on the north shore of Hallo Bay. They used both the umiak and kayak and one and two-bladed paddles. [3]

There is one other reference to the Douglas Pass. In 1880, Ivan Petroff, the U.S. census taker, reported that "Douglas [listed as Kaguyak on modern maps], being the primary sea otter hunting center on the coast at this time, was located at the terminus of a portage to Bristol Bay." [4] It is not clear, however, what route constituted the Douglas Pass trail, although it may have used portions of the Hallo Bay trail.

The Katmai Pass trail, beginning just south of the Hallo Bay trail, followed the Naknek Lake system to the mouth of the Ukak River. It then ascended the drainage to its headwaters at Katmai Pass before descending through the cliffs and canyons of the Katmai River to Katmai village.

During the Russian and early American time periods, the Sugpiat/Alutiiq and Savonoski people continued using these established routes for fur trading and hunting as well as for their own subsistence activities. By the late 1790s, the Russians had learned about the pass as well; in response, the Russian-American Company capitalized on the trading ties between the interior and coastal Native peoples by establishing a trading store at Katmai. Two decades later, in 1818, the Russians established the Nushagak trading post. Russian traders at Katmai reacted to the action by employing some of the local villagers to portage goods westward to Nushagak and furs from there back to Katmai. [5]

By 1845, traders and hunting parties routinely headed into the interior of the peninsula and used the Katmai trading post as a base camp. To a lesser extent, they also used the old Hallo Bay portage. But neither trail was a heavily used trade route. To supply their depots along the shores of Bristol Bay, Kodiak-based Russian traders avoided the area. Some sailed around the Alaska Peninsula, while others traversed the peninsula on trails that crossed either Iliamna or Becharof lakes. The trails, both of which were easier than the Hallo Bay or Katmai Pass trails, were located outside of today's park boundaries. [6]

Well into the early American period, the Katmai Pass trail continued to be used for subsistence and trading activities. Following in the footsteps of the Russian American Company, the Alaska Commercial Company maintained similar fur trading activities with its store at Katmai. In 1871, Alphonse Louis Pinart visited Katmai and noted "quite a large business" in furs was being carried on with villages in the interior and on Bristol Bay by way of a portage up the Katmai River, past "Lake Naknik," and down Naknek River to the sea. [7] Former Katmai resident Harry Kaiakokonok remembered his dad, who was born in Savonoski, telling him that the Savonoski people used to travel to Katmai by dog teams. [8]

The mountainous Katmai Pass route was strenuous and dangerous. The fact that the Savonoski people preferred to take the arduous mountain route to trade at Katmai as opposed to taking the easier water route to the Bristol Bay stores is a testament to how strongly they preferred trading with people at Katmai.

By the 1870s, the number of trade goods traversing Katmai Pass was declining. But the route gained new popularity when census taker Ivan Petroff published an account of his crossing in 1881. He characterized his voyage, taken from west to east during a four-day period in October 1880, as "tedious and difficult." His progress, for example, was slowed by the "crossing of eight turbulent streams, each from knee to waist deep and of considerable width," and the day he crossed Katmai Pass "was employed entirely in crossing glaciers and passing through rocky defiles at the summit of the range." He even

bemoaned the "exceedingly rapid and precipitous" descent to the wooded lower valley of the Katmai River, in which he was forced to cross "innumerable" branches of the stream and carve a path through seemingly interminable thickets. [9]

A decade later, an expedition sponsored by *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* scrambled over the pass. In a remarkable wintertime trip, a party headed by E. H. Wells headed southeast from Nushagak in early 1891. That February, the party reached what was most certainly the mouth of the Ukak River. From there, Wells noted their progress as follows:

The way at first led up through a dreary, rock-bound cañon, narrow and half-filled with snow and ice. Over the treacherous surface we passed in safety, and curving upward among the peaks, snow-robed and desolate, reached at length a small frozen lake which marked the summit of the "divide." All about us was a wild array of peaks bare of any semblance of vegetation and wearing a wild, Arctic aspect. The roar of water could be heard in several cañons, and in one place the torrent had washed away its heavy coverlet of snow leaving a thirty-foot cliff of that material on either bank. In the strata we noticed several red streaks, indicating that at some time or other the red snow of the Arctic regions had fallen upon these mountains. [10]

A month later, the remainder of the Frank Leslie party followed a similar route, and as expedition leader A. B. Schanz described it, the party started "on a veritable stampede over the dangerous Katmai pass" on March 7. Prior to leaving Savonoski village, the party had spent two days waiting out a blizzard. The weather that day turned out to be no better than before; despite that obstacle, Schanz wrote, the men and dogs

maintained so great a speed that it was all Stepan and I could do to keep out of their way. When we got over the hot sulphur pools on the top of the "divide," and the descent began with a gradual slope over a snow-covered glacier, the dash assumed a semblance of recklessness which shook one's nerves. The descent might eventually have ended disastrously, had not several bald spots of ground, where the Pacific sun had already driven away the snow, intervened and acted as brakes. Then Stepan and I started the grandest coasting experience in the history of sled-traveling. We got down without an accident, and camped at sea-level, about eight miles from Katmai, at half-past four in the afternoon. We had made a trip, which has taken days, in five and a half hours." [11] [12]

Use of the Katmai Pass increased with goldseekers headed for Nome on the Seward Peninsula. It is not clear how many prospectors crossed through Katmai Pass, although a bunkhouse was built at Katmai to accommodate the travelers. [13] The trail was used especially in the wintertime when the Bering Sea route to Nome was inaccessible.

Rex Beach's book *The Silver Horde* detailed crossing the pass when strong winds tossed rocks about. In his February 1901 visit to Katmai, Beach noted the Alaska Commercial Company trader's comments about the pass:

Petellin admitted that the place was too windy for him. "It would never become popular," he said. Katmai Pass had a reputation as a "man-killer."



Above: Charlie Carter, shown here in 1917, formerly carried the mail through the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes and crossed Katmai Pass on a dog sled. UAA, Consortium Library, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai expeditions collection, Box 2, 1019.

About forty lives had been lost on the Katmai trail, the trader said, and at that moment the settlement was in mourning for two natives who about a week earlier had been caught in the open by a storm while crossing from the north. One had died, and the other "never would be much good to his family." Once when he had been over-taken by a storm in the pass, Petellin related, the wind had picked up a heavy cast-iron kettle and whisked it away "with the speed of a cannon ball." [14]

In 1900 the Postmaster General sent an expedition to investigate the possibility of using the Katmai route for its overland service to western Alaska. As a result, the U.S. Post Office Department began using the route during the winter of 1900-1901. It is not clear how long the Katmai Pass route was used. [15] Charlie Carter carried the mail from Nome to Katmai one winter. Dr. Griggs interviewed Carter about the country prior to the volcanic eruption and was told that

on the upper part of Naknek Lake the ice was very treacherous, sometimes thawing out when the air temperature had not risen above 15 degrees F., which clearly indicated to him the presence of hot springs somewhere in the vicinity. [16]

The geologist J. E. Spurr's United States Geological Survey exploration and subsequent report of 1898 provided the best source of information on the condition of the Katmai Pass trail prior to the 1912 volcanic eruption. Spurr's expedition provided the only known detailed map of the route and photograph of the pass prior to 1912. [17] Spurr's account is as follows:

The trip from the lake to the seacoast occupied three and one-half days, an average of nearly 20 miles a day, all of which we made on foot, largely through swamps and deep moss. On the 16th of October [1898] we crossed the mountain pass and descended to the other side.

This pass lies between two extinct volcanoes and is high, snowy, and rocky, and has no definite trail. The wind is often so cold and violent here, even in summer, that the natives do not dare to cross except in calm weather, for the

gusts are so powerful that stones of considerable size are carried along by them.

On the sea side of the pass we came to a considerable stream of hot water which emerged from the side of one of the volcanoes and flowed down, steaming, to reach the cooler water of the other mountain drainage. On the 17th of October we arrived at the Aleut village of Katmai, where we found a Russian trader. [[18](#)]

The June 1912 eruption had a major impact on the trail; it buried most or all of the route between Iliuk Arm and Katmai village in volcanic ash, in places several feet deep. But because the pre-1912 trail had never been a specific, identifiable pathway, the overall route remained as before.

Reuse of portions of the trail began with the National Geographic Society expeditions. In 1916, after his third expedition effort, Robert F. Griggs, explorer and botanist for the Society, finally reached the summit of Katmai Pass. From the summit, Griggs saw the fumaroles in the valley below for the first time.

The sight that flashed into view as we surmounted the hillock was one of the most amazing visions ever beheld by mortal eye. The whole valley as far as the eye could reach was full of hundreds, no thousands—literally, tens of thousands—of smokes curling up from its fissured floor. [[19](#)]

This discovery led to the establishment, two years later, of Katmai National Monument.

A few tourist trips followed in the footsteps of NGS expeditions. Most tourists sailed from Kodiak to Katmai Bay and followed on foot the route leading up to Katmai Pass, although other adventurers, such as Naknek schoolteacher Alyce Anderson, approached the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes via Savonoski and the Ukak River valley.

After the 1920s, the trail was ignored for the next several decades, but in the 1960s, recreational hikers rediscovered the route. For those beginning their journey at the Three Forks Overlook, the summit of Katmai Pass has been, in the words of one guidebook, a "destination for most hikers in the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes." Few, however, seek out the east or west ends of the Katmai Pass trail. The Hallo Bay trail has seen little twentieth century use, save for Savonoski-area Natives who, as late as the 1930s, returned to the Savonoski River valley on annual bear hunts. [[20](#)]

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Katmai

Building in an Ashen Land: Historic Resource Study



CHAPTER 6:

MINERAL EXPLORATION AND MINING

Early Prospecting Activity

RUSSIAN MINING ENGINEER Petr Doroshin made the first exploration of the Katmai country with an eye toward its mineral possibilities. In 1852, he headed westward from Kamishak Bay to Iliamna Lake and on to Bristol Bay. On his return trip, he ascended Naknek River to Naknek Lake and continued on to the "Mishket River" (probably the Ukak River), then returned to the Pacific Coast via Katmai Pass. Hearing of enticing possibilities for coal extraction, he dispatched a party to investigate "Kanikagluk Bay," which was probably either Amalik Bay or Kukak Bay. He was enthusiastic over the results, regarding the deposit as the best in Alaska. (The Russians, by this time, had established Coal Village at the southwestern tip of the nearby Kenai Peninsula, but they had not yet begun to develop the local coal deposit.) Doroshin and other Russians sought coal-development locations in order to supply the new California market. But before he could develop the deposits along the Katmai coast, he explored other coastal areas for their coal potential. By the time he returned to Russia, he had become convinced that the deposits near Coal Village had the most development potential. By 1865, the Russians had found evidence of petroleum near Katmai Bay, but due to a lack of interest it remained undeveloped. [1]

Few prospectors entered the Katmai country in the years following the American purchase of Alaska. The first known prospectors to visit the area crossed over Katmai Pass in 1890, and later that decade a ragtag army of prospectors headed over the same route on their way to the Nome gold fields. But so far as is known, none found "pay dirt" along the way.

The U.S. Geological Survey began surveying the coastline in 1895. William Healy Dall and George Becker were dispatched to search for gold and coal potential; they found no gold, but found two pockets of coal. Near Cape Douglas they found minor coal deposits. Along the shore of Amalik Bay—probably in the same place identified by Doroshin's investigators more than forty years earlier—they found "three seams of a pretty good coal," although "the small dimensions of the seam forbid anticipating any commercial future for it." Ralph Stone, who visited the same stretch of coastline for the agency nine years later, provided much the same conclusions for the Cape Douglas coal seams; he found that "because of their small extent and bony character" they had no commercial value.

In 1902, interest in the area's petroleum potential was raised again when an oil well was drilled near "Cold Bay" (now known as Puale Bay), just south of the present park. The discovery brought a bevy of activity to the area, but the initial well was not successful and by 1906 the area had been practically abandoned. The U.S. Geological Survey, hoping to lend a hand, sent geologist George Martin to survey the area for its petroleum potential. His report regarding the Katmai coastline was glum to an extreme. "The geology of the coast ... between Douglas River and Katmai [village]," he wrote, "does not warrant in the slightest degree any petroleum prospecting."



Prospectors weighting out gold dust in payment for provisions that they purchased from the National Geographic Society's 1917 expedition. *UAA, Consortium Library, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions collection, Box 3, 3206.*

The 1912 eruption in the Mount Katmai area created a thick ash layer over hundreds of square miles of the surrounding landscape. Some mineral resources, therefore, were doubtless lost, but others were created; the USGS's George Martin returned to the Katmai coast during the summer of 1912 and was effusive about the commercial possibilities for the coastal ash deposits. [2]

The eruption affected prospecting activity only slightly; a prospector by the name of Bob Scott reportedly fled the area with the Savonoski residents. [3] Others, however, began trickling into the area soon afterward. Perhaps that same year, Charlie McNeil and Norman B. Cook found copper-bearing veins about 17 miles inland on a stream running into a "southwest bight" of Kamishak Bay. (The stream was probably McNeil River.) Z. T. and C. D. Halferty located seven claims in the Kuliak Bay area in 1913 and 1917. [4] In 1915, Fred and Jack Mason discovered placer gold along a small stream, locally called Lonesome Pine Creek, just south of Cape Kubugakli. Two years later, Robert Griggs discovered that "There are some places where one can gather crystals of sulphur, almost free from impurities, by the bushel." In 1918, Alex Grant found placer gold on American Creek; he made several attempts to work the gravels but failed. [5] The same year, the Geological Survey encountered the Shelikof Mining Company working at its copper prospect near Kukak Bay. Of those discoveries, only the Mason claim, which produced a small amount of gold, tin, and molybdenum over an eight-year period, ever witnessed ore production. [6]



Halferty's Cabin with Paul Hagelbarger, member of the National Geographic Society Katmai expedition, in Kuliak Bay, 1919. *UAA, Consortium Library, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expeditions collection, Box 6, 5516.*

The Monument Proclamation and Its Impacts

In 1916, the National Geographic Society began to lobby various governmental officials to create a national monument in the ash-laden area surrounding Mount Katmai. In order to placate territorial authorities, the officials who roughed out the initial boundaries were careful to exclude known areas with commercial development potential; the southern boundary, in particular, was drawn so as to exclude the Cold Bay (Puale Bay), Cape Kubugakli, and Gas Creek mining properties. The relative lack of activity within the proposed boundaries encouraged park advocates to push for the creation of a monument that prohibited mining. [7] The USGS, which was asked for its opinion regarding the proposed withdrawal, indicated that it would not intercede against it, but neither could it muster much enthusiasm for it. Secretary of the Interior Franklin Lane, asked to make a final decision, conditionally agreed to the reservation despite the USGS's objections. Lane apparently felt that the land should be withdrawn pending a geological investigation; if that reconnaissance showed high mineral values, all or part of the monument could be returned to the public domain. [8]

In February 1920, Congress decided to open Alaska's public lands to oil prospecting again after a ten-year hiatus, and development interests responded by filing a flurry of oil leases in any areas in which USGS officials had shown petroleum potential. Thus in the Puale Bay area, oil leases blanketed the area to such an extent that some leases stretched all the way north to the monument's southwestern boundary. North of the monument, oil seeps had been discovered on the shoreline of Kamishak Bay; as a result, leases were scattered along the bay's southwestern shore and also went ten miles up the Kamishak River. The flurry of excitement, however, was all for naught. The only successful wells in the Cold Bay field were more than twenty miles southwest of the monument, and no drilling ever took place on the margins of Kamishak Bay. The oil leases were eventually cancelled. [9]

A small mineral development on the west shore of Shelikof Strait was responsible for the first alteration of Katmai's boundaries. In the early 1920s, John J. Folstad began working a coal seam on the western shore of Amalik Bay, opposite Takli Island. (This was probably the location that had been discovered by Becker and Dall in 1895.) In response, Folstad petitioned the government for a permit to develop the site. The NPS, recognizing the value of coal, knew that the petition might well result in pressure to open the entire monument to mining. The agency, therefore, felt it better to remove the area from the monument. On September 5, 1923, President Calvin Coolidge issued Executive Order No. 3897, which excluded 10 acres from the monument. [10]

In 1923, the long-expected Geological Survey expedition finally took place, when both Walter R. Smith and Kirtley F. Mather led survey parties into the Katmai country. Smith's party described and mapped much of the existing monument, and also fanned out to areas as far west as Dumpling Mountain and as far southwest as Becharof Lake. Mather's party surveyed the area to the north. It covered each of the coastal drainages from Paint River south to Cape Douglas, and also headed inland to survey the Savonoski River, Kulik Lake, Battle Lake, and Moraine-Funnel Creek drainages. The geologists found several mineralized areas in their surveys, most notably in the Paint River drainage and the Cold Bay area. The area within the monument, however, was "very little mineralized." Regarding the reputed petroleum deposits near Kamishak Bay, Mather could muster only a tepid enthusiasm. He felt that a search for petroleum was justified "throughout such of the southeastern portion of the Kamishak Bay region," but urged prospective drillers to first exploit the Cold Bay field first, where the geological structures appeared to be more favorable. [11] For the remainder of the decade, no other mining activities took place either inside the monument or in the immediately surrounding area.

In November 1930, Robert F. Griggs spearheaded an effort to extend Katmai National Monument's boundaries to the north and west. In a letter to an Interior Department official, Griggs gave a broad rationale for expanding the park and noted that there were "no minerals of value" except for a worked-out gold placer at Cape Kubugakli. As part of his expansion recommendations, he took care to avoid the oil-bearing tracts which surrounded Puale Bay. [12]

The following January the NPS, in consultation with Griggs and the Interior Department, laid out the boundaries of the proposed monument expansion. The Geological Survey, when asked its opinion of the area's economic geology, offered a dim view of the area's suitability as a park. The agency, advocating for known or suspected mineral locations, gave an optimistic analysis of the area's petroleum and gold potential. In addition, it noted that:

Regarding the area north of the present monument in the Kamishak Bay region, [geologist Kirtley F.] Mather reports a number of metallic mineral deposits in those places where igneous activity not related to recent volcanism has been intense. Conditions analogous to those described by him probably also occur in parts of the unsurveyed regions west and southwest of Cape Douglas, which is included within the boundaries of the enlarged monument.
[13]

The Service, in response, offered to pare the size of its proposed expansion, and the final boundary line that was signed in President Hoover's April 1931 proclamation was a painful compromise between the NPS and the USGS. [14] A tacit effect of the expansion was its reincorporation of the 10-acre parcel that had been removed from the monument in 1923. (Folstad had long since lost interest in his coal claim.)

During the 1930s, as noted in Chapter 8, a small but stubborn group of trappers resided in various parts of the monument. Some prospectors doubtless also entered the monument, and a few of the trappers also prospected from time to time. As a result, three mining sites were located on the margins of the monument. Roy Fure and Martin Mickelson, both of Naknek, found a cinnabar vein in 1934 while traveling up Gorge Creek. Mickelson retorted about 200 pounds of the Gorge Creek vein but found that the mercury it contained was not of sufficient value to develop further. Fure, who continued to prospect in the area, found several more deposits just north of the original find. [15] In 1938, along American Creek, Bill Hammersly found additional placer gold deposits in the same general area where Alex Grant had prospected twenty years earlier. Hammersly continued to work the stream gravels each summer until 1941, by which time he had located eighteen placer claims that stretched one to two miles upstream from the monument boundary. He found extensive bench gold deposits; its quantity, however, was insufficient to sustain extended operations. The only other reported gold deposits were located along the shores of Lake Brooks. These deposits, located inside the boundaries of the monument—and thus extracted illegally—were apparently discovered in the late 1930s or early 1940s. Only small amounts were ever found. [16]

The situation was much the same along Shelikof Strait. As noted in other chapters, those who were attracted to the area were either trappers, fishermen or fox farmers. Once there, however, they sought whatever means they could to scratch out a living. On the north shore of Takli Island, W. E. Baumann located several placer claims beginning in 1931. There is no evidence, however, that either he or others in the area found anything of economic significance. [17]

In 1941, J. C. Roehm, an investigator from the Territorial Bureau of Mines, visited the

Naknek Lake region and investigated the mining possibilities for various area properties. Roehm visited the American Creek claims and attempted but failed to visit those along Gorge Creek. [18]

Pumice Extraction

The Katmai area, in all likelihood, would have had little mineral extraction activity had demand been limited to hard rock minerals. What Katmai had in abundance was siliceous volcanic ash, otherwise known as pumicite. The 1912 eruption had extruded over five cubic miles of the material, enough to cover a 3,000-square-mile area a foot deep. [19] The ash, at that time, had no commercial value, and almost no one felt slighted when the 1918 proclamation placed most of the ash deposits within the monument's boundaries.

The value of pumicite, however, began to increase during World War II. Both the army and navy needed base materials in the construction of roads and airfields, and military personnel found pumicite superior to sand and gravel. After the war, Alaska faced an unprecedented demand for materials in the building construction industry, and various private sector interests recognized that pumicite might fulfill those needs. One Anchorage-based company began to extract ash deposits from Augustine Island, but it was soon discovered that the ash was an inferior material for the products they were producing. Casting about for an alternative, they visited Takli Island (within Katmai National Monument), took samples, and found them to be well suited to their needs. [20]

Pumice developers knew that Takli Island was located in Katmai National Monument and was thus off-limits to mining, but they hoped that the region's need for building materials might allow a legislative solution. So, beginning in April 1947, they began what proved to be a long-running campaign to allow pumice development. The campaign eventually involved the NPS Director, the Secretary of the Interior, and even the Attorney General's office. By the time it ended in April 1954, the pumice developers had been granted the legal right to extract pumice from the shore of Geographic Harbor, but by that time, the market had changed and pumice was no longer a sought-after material. [21]

Despite the Herculean efforts made by both developers and legislators to tap into Katmai's pumicite deposits, few on-the-ground impacts ever resulted. Takli Island was the site of a small operation during 1947, and Geographic Harbor witnessed some activity in 1950 and 1951. The latter operation, which took place along the west shore of the upper harbor, was never very sophisticated; major on-site equipment consisted of a barge, a Caterpillar, a duck (a large, amphibious truck) and a shack on skids. The shack remained for years afterward, but by 1985 all that remained was a large pumice berm, two four-foot pilings, and a few scraps of metal. [22]

Recent Mineral Development

In addition to the push to develop the monument's volcanic ash deposits, some hard rock extraction efforts were taking place as well. On November 14, 1948, pilot Bill Smith flew Charlie "Red" Robinson, trapper Jim Marlette, and a planeload of supplies to the eastern end of Lake Grosvenor. The location of the ore body, which supposedly held "rock mineral of high value content," is not known; it may have been the cinnabar deposits along Gorge Creek. Their entry into the area, however, was not discovered until the following April. Carlos Carson, the Dillingham-based fish and wildlife agent and deputy NPS park ranger, suspected that their entry was illegal and deduced that their mining activities were as well. Armed with a stack of regulations, Carson may have asked the miners to cease their

operations, or perhaps the miners gave up on their own. [23]

Scattered amounts of other mining activity surfaced during the postwar years. In 1947, George Hadden occupied a cabin on the north shore of Takli Island; he was probably prospecting the same claims that W. E. Baumann had located back in 1931. (Takli Island had been absorbed into the monument in 1942. Mining claims made before that date, however, could still be developed.) [24] Marlette continued to prospect as well as trap, and had another camp along the Kulik River, north of the existing monument. His cabin was later eliminated by Northern Consolidated Airlines personnel, who had established a fishing camp on the river's north side, just west of Kulik Lake, in 1950. [25]

In 1954, the U.S. Geological Survey assigned A. Samuel Keller and Hillard N. Reiser to make a new investigation of the monument's geology and mineralogical potential. Their study also included a broad surrounding area, including Becharof Lake, Kulik and Nonvianuk lakes, the Kamishak River drainage, and the upper King Salmon River drainage. Keller and Reiser, who were primarily interested in the area's oil and gas deposits, gained the data for their study primarily by examining aerial photography and perusing existing reports, not by extensive field investigation. [26] To those who wanted to mine or drill, their conclusions were not encouraging. They were able to locate three broad bodies of coal-bearing rocks—west of Cape Nukshak, south of Geographic Harbor, and north of Dakavak Lake—but downplayed the monument's coal mining potential. In a similar vein, they described the location of several known or purported oil and gas seeps, but concluded that "it is unlikely that favorable petroleum strata can be reached at practical drilling depths on most of the structures that could be drilled." [27]

Another 1954 report dealt more specifically with the monument's hard rock mineral potential. G. Donald Eberlein, a mineral deposits geologist with the USGS, noted that the most promising mineral find was the gold deposit near Cape Kubugakli. Beyond that, however, Eberlein was pessimistic. He concluded that "we cannot rule out the possibility of ultimately finding additional deposits in the Monument ... although the likelihood that such deposits occur is not very great." [28]

When NPS officials, in the early 1970s, began to consider the expansion of Katmai National Monument and its conversion into a national park, they had to incorporate into their plans the proposed area's mineral values. Prior to August 1971, four copper and gold claims had been located along the south shore of Kulik Lake and six others were clustered in the upper Strike Creek drainage. A site containing an unknown mineral was also located in the upper Douglas River drainage, but no claim had been made there. In one of the NPS's three proposed "areas of environmental concern," there was also a series of unpatented lode claims, known collectively as the Pfaff claim, which were located on 1800 acres of land northeast of Battle Lake. None of the four mineral areas within the proposed park were patented. [29] In addition to the mineral claims, the proposed park addition contained 224 current oil and gas leases and one current oil and gas lease application, all located north of the existing monument. Based on the information in Keller and Reiser's study, however, the NPS felt that it was "unlikely that practical drilling operations in many areas will be able to reach structural and stratigraphic traps that have the potential for containing oil." [30]

When asked for their comments, in April 1974, the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Bureau of Mines did not like the idea of an expanded Katmai National Park. The two agencies again noted the "high grade" deposits near Kulik Lake and Battle Lake, the high geothermal properties of the area, and continued to stress the high (though unproven) mineral potential of various geological structures in the area. But NPS officials were unmoved by such arguments, and the Final Environmental Statement continued to

nominate for park status each of the known mineral potential areas that had been proposed in the draft document. [31]

In addition to those who responded with written comments, Ernest Pfaff spoke directly to NPS officials of the need to keep a portion of the proposed northern addition open to mining. Pfaff, a Naknek prospector who also held claims northeast of Battle Lake, told NPS staff that he had been prospecting in the area, particularly in the Kulik Lake drainage, since 1950. He had found five or six mineral deposits in the drainage during that time, but had recorded none of them. In the fall of 1972, he located what appeared to be a paying prospect north of the upper end of Kulik Lake, but because of the land freeze, he was unable to stake a claim. [32]

Soon after the Katmai enlargement, NPS personnel tried to ascertain the number of mining claims in the newly-expanded area. Their search revealed a total of eight claims—four lode and four placer—in three claim groups. They included four placer claims in the Sugarloaf Association group, the Dog #5 lode claim, and three lode claims which comprised the Pfaff claim group. None of the unpatented claims had records of previous mineral production. The Bureau of Land Management investigated these claims and found that the claimants to the Sugarloaf Association and Dog #5 claims had no legal rights to their properties, and by the end of May 1983 the agency had declared both claims null and void.

The Pfaff claim, therefore, was Katmai's only active mining claim group. Ernest Pfaff had discovered the lode, located four miles east of Battle Lake camp, in 1964. The mineralized vein, which straddles the border of the park and preserve, consisted primarily of gold- and chalcopyrite-bearing quartz, and also contained malachite, pyrite, and an unidentified silver-sulphosalt mineral. An undetermined amount of ore was shipped during the next several years. [33] By July 1984, Pfaff had apparently abandoned his interest in the property, so he transferred his interest in the claim to Hawley Resource Properties, owned by Charles Hawley. The new claimant, however, made no further moves to develop its claim. In 1988, the claimant let its interest in the claim lapse, and on May 5, 1989, the Bureau of Land Management declared the claim null and void. [34]

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Katmai

Building in an Ashen Land: Historic Resource Study



CHAPTER 7:

CLAM AND SALMON CANNING

TODAY, BRISTOL BAY is widely known as having the world's most plentiful stocks of wild sockeye (red) salmon, and the Naknek River system that flows out of Katmai National Park has long been known as one of the primary contributors to the bay's salmon stocks. The upper reaches of the Alagnak River drainage system also boast healthy salmon populations, though not to the extent of the Naknek River system. Along the eastern edge of the park, the many streams that flow into Shelikof Strait also had healthy salmon runs, and along Katmai's coastline—from Hallo Bay to Cape Douglas and also in Kashvik Baylie some of the state's most productive clam beds. Commercial fisheries interests, not surprisingly, were quick to respond to the area's abundant salmon and clam populations, and the legacy of that response is a number of abandoned canneries and a long record of fish and shellfish harvesting in and around park waters.

Early Fisheries Activity

Area activity related to fishing or shellfish harvesting began soon after the United States government acquired Alaska from the Russians. In 1880, just two years after the establishment of Alaska's first two salmon canneries, two "fishing establishments" were located on Kodiak Island. [1] Two years later, Kodiak Island's first salmon cannery—the Smith and Hirsh cannery—was opened at salmon-rich Karluk Spit. As Patricia Roppel has made clear in her volume *Salmon from Kodiak*, salmon canning soon became a highly successful industry on Kodiak and nearby Afognak and Raspberry islands, and the Smith and Hirsh facility was the first of more than thirty cannery sites on those three islands.

Meanwhile, commercial interests were eyeing Bristol Bay's remarkable red salmon resource. Commercial fishing boats entered the bay in 1882, and a year later the Arctic Packing Company established a salting station on the Nushagak River at Kanulik. [2] That operation, in 1884, was expanded into a cannery, and by 1887 three more canneries had been established along the Nushagak. Cannery interests also investigated the salmon runs elsewhere in the bay, and in 1891 a packing operation was built along the Ugashik River, 50 miles south of the mouth of the Nushagak. [3]

To a large extent, the capital as well as much of the labor that operated the canneries and salteries of Kodiak Island and Bristol Bay came from outside Alaska. Companies based in Seattle, Portland, or San Francisco typically financed these facilities. The managers and skilled craftsmen hailed from the

U.S. or western Europe, and the fishermen in the company's employ were Scandinavians or southern Europeans. In some locations, the cannery crews were primarily of Chinese or Japanese extraction; but elsewhere, local Natives participated as well. (Natives, less often, also worked as fishermen.) The crews arrived in late spring, lived in marginal and isolated conditions during their time in Alaska, and returned to a West Coast port as soon as the salmon run had passed. People affiliated with canneries had few opportunities to intermingle, or do business, with local residents. [4]



Above: Swikshak Bay has been the site of both salmon and clam canning operations. When Surf Canneries owned and operated the cannery, during the mid-1930s, the site included a mess hall, store and warehouse, fishing cabins and docks. A cannery operated here until 1951. *NPS-LAKA Studies Center Collection.*

By 1890, fishing interests had established a toehold in the immediate vicinity of the present-day park when two salteries began operating along the lower Naknek River. Five years later, that presence increased when the Arctic Packing Company and the Naknek Packing Company built canneries along the Naknek. By the close of the century, additional canneries had been built in new Bristol Bay locations: at Koggiung, Egegik, and elsewhere. Ever since that time, the salmon industry has been by far the dominant industry Bristol Bay, and for more than a century at least one cannery has been in operation along the Naknek River. [5] The presence of this industry, not surprisingly, has had a tangible effect on the health of the salmon populations that have returned each year to the lakes and streams in Katmai National Park and Preserve.

After the turn of the century, Native participation in the area's commercial fishing industry began to increase. Two reasons account for the change: first, canneries offered the lure of a cash economy, and second, Congressional anti-immigration laws (such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904) forced cannery interests to look elsewhere for labor. By June 1912, therefore, it was noted that "a goodly proportion of the working force" at the Naknek salmon packing plant "evidently came from [the Native village of] Savonoski on the upper Naknek River drainage." [6]

Natives living on the Shelikof Strait side of the Alaska Peninsula after the turn of the century were also tied to the commercial fishing industry. Kaflia Bay, just south of Kukak Bay, became the site of a seasonal saltery and store, and in response, Katmai and Douglas villagers flocked to the site and beach-seined for salmon. The saltery was apparently so successful that by 1912, many local residents (in the words of archeologist Don Dumond) "were actually in the informal process of being relocated at Kaflia Bay." [7] The eruption of Novarupta in June 1912, however, abruptly ended that activity; ash from the volcano buried Kaflia Bay village to a depth of three feet on the level and forced all the villagers to flee. [8]

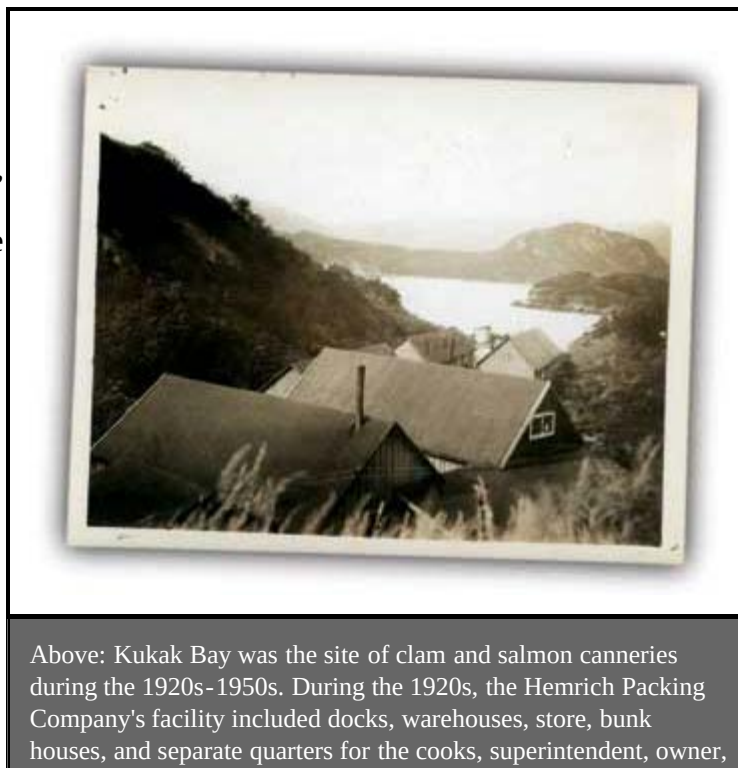
Clam and Salmon Canneries on Shelikof Strait, 1921-1951

Several years later, a new industry—clam processing—began to emerge as a significant industry along the eastern coastline of the park. The commercial production of clams, predictably, had begun in southeastern Alaska; then, in 1916, the Cordova area witnessed the territory's first large-scale clam cannery. Just three years later, the Surf Packing Company built a cannery at Snug Harbor on the southwest side of Chisik Island. This site was north of Katmai, and was just east of Lake Clark National Park.). The Snug Harbor facility was a salmon cannery, but it made an experimental pack of clams. It continued clam production the following year. In 1921, still harvesting salmon as its primary income stream, the company also harvested an estimated \$9,940 in clams; that total comprised the entire Alaskan pack of canned clams that year. This combination of clam and salmon canning was to characterize fisheries operations along the west side of Cook Inlet (and adjacent Shelikof Strait) for the next thirty years. [9]

In 1922, the Kamishak Canning Company brought the industry closer to the park when it built a salmon cannery at Kamishak Bay. It put up only one pack, however, and was not used again.

A year later, the Hemrich Packing Company opened a clam-canning operation at Kukak Bay. The year after it opened, it also went into business as a salmon cannery. In 1925, the company leased its facility to the Seashore Packing Company, which put up a pack for the next three years. The Hemrich Packing Company operated the salmon and clam cannery on its own in 1928, but leased it again to the Seashore Packing Company for the 1929 through 1931 seasons. In 1932, the Pioneer Packing Company leased the cannery. The plant was closed for the next two years, but Surf Canneries purchased it processed clams there in 1935 and 1936. By 1936, Kukak Bay had a clam and salmon cannery appraised at \$89,000, while Swikshak Bay (where the clams were harvested) had "fishing cabins, docks, and other improvements" valued at \$2,000. [10] The two sites were abandoned after the 1936 season. The Kukak Bay facility differed from most of the other canneries in that it did not employ fish traps as part of its operations. [11]

The salmon that were processed in the various Kukak Bay operations were harvested from the Shelikof Strait and other nearby areas. The clamming beds, as noted in a 1923 Hemrich Packing Company brochure, were located at "Swickshak Beach" (Swikshak Bay). [12] These beds were used intermittently for the remainder of the decade. As time wore on, however, workers discovered that high quality clam habitat could be found along much of the 50-mile stretch of beach between Kukak Bay to Cape Douglas. By 1931, Kashvik Bay was being harvested as well. Hemrich and its lessees were the sole users of the mainland beaches during the 1923-1932



Above: Kukak Bay was the site of clam and salmon canneries during the 1920s-1950s. During the 1920s, the Hemrich Packing Company's facility included docks, warehouses, store, bunk houses, and separate quarters for the cooks, superintendent, owner,

period. When the facilities at Kukak and Swikshak bays closed down, however, a Kodiak Island packer moved in. [13]

watchman and the "winter man." The Surf Cannery was operating here for the 1935 and 1936 seasons when it is believed that this photograph was taken. *NPS-LAKA Studies Center Collection.*

The clamming facilities, and most of the clam beds, were located outside the original (1918) boundaries of the monument. When Katmai's boundaries were expanded in April 1931, both the canneries and the clamming beaches were absorbed into the monument. Because of an oversight, the language of the 1931 proclamation did not specifically address the rights of existing users. It was not until the mid-1930s that clamming interests discovered the error; a June 1936 presidential proclamation was issued that recognized the rights of all those who had used the land prior to the boundary expansion. Surf's management intended to follow up on the proclamation by obtaining a patent to its lands. The company's operations, however, were shut down in September 1936 when a fire swept through and destroyed the Swikshak Bay facilities. The company made no further attempts to patent its properties and, as noted above, appears to have abandoned its interests at both Kukak and Swikshak soon afterwards. By 1941, fire had destroyed the Kukak Bay cannery, and both the wharf and pilings there were found to be "in a bad state of repair." [14]

In 1944, the Kodiak-based firm of Kester and Kline operated a clam cannery in Swikshak Bay. The cannery was allowed to operate to supply the U.S. Army. The NPS permitted the operation as a part of its wartime program. That permit remained in force through late 1945. [15] The following March 1946, the firm changed its name to the Cape Douglas Canning Corporation (CDCC) and continued harvesting Swikshak Bay clams. [16] Late in 1946, CDCC applied for a clam harvesting permit; after some initial hesitation, the NPS issued them a five-year permit, and in 1947 the company harvested both clams and salmon at its Swikshak Bay facility. [17]



Above: Surf Canneries wharf at Kukak Bay. Photo taken circa 1935. *NPS-LAKA Studies Center Collection.*

The company, which changed its name to Mainland Fisheries in 1948, relocated its salmon canning operations to Kukak Bay that year. It continued to operate a cannery there until 1951. But it also obtained a permit to a 2.7-acre site on the east bank of Swikshak Lagoon for clam harvesting purposes. [18] At Swikshak Bay, Mainland Fisheries built a 40-foot by 40-foot Quonset hut for a cannery building, placing it on piles on the site of the old Surf Cannery which had been destroyed in the 1936 fire. Mainland also built a 40-foot by 110-foot dock adjacent to the cannery and a 30-foot by 100-foot platform to the rear. A mess hall, store-supply building, and bunkhouses that had not been destroyed in the fire were rehabilitated. [19]

In January 1950 a new company—the Whiz Halferty Cannery Corporation—asked the NPS if it could put clambers' cabins on the shore of Swikshak Bay. Fourteen months later, over Mainland's objections, the NPS gave the company a five-year permit to put up clam

diggers' cabins on a five-acre parcel at Swikshak Bay. There is no evidence, however, that the company constructed any cabins there. [20]

Shelikof Strait Clam Harvesting Activity, 1951-present

During the early 1950s, clam digging took place at Kaguyak Bay, probably in conjunction with Mainland Fisheries' Kukak Bay operation. Lowell Sumner, a biologist from NPS's Region Four office, noted that "the clam diggers sail their fleet of skiffs in here" [to Kaguyak Bay] each summer. The six shacks they occupied comprised the "village" of Kaguyak. Kaguyak, at that time, still boasted a Russian Orthodox church which dated from the pre-1912 era. By 1952, however, little was left of the 20 remaining barabaras where the former residents had lived. By 1965, the church had apparently been burned by clam diggers who had taken up residence in it. [21]

Mainland Fisheries, in 1951, went into receivership and ceased operations. Whiz Halferty remained inactive as well. In June 1954, however, an official of the latter company, now known as Halferty Canneries, wrote the NPS and requested that Mainland's twenty acres of Kukak Bay cannery buildings be added to Halferty's permit. Assured by company officials that the plant was planning to operate again, the BLM gave the company a permit to use its facilities at Swikshak Lagoon, Swikshak Bay, and Kukak Bay. The permit was valid from February 1956 until February 1961. [22] It is not known, however, if the company actually harvested clams (or used its facilities) during this period.

On October 15, 1959, Halferty Canneries transferred its clam-harvesting interests to the Alaska Packers Association (APA). In December 1960, the new company requested a new five-year special use permit, and in May 1961, the BLM gave the APA a permit which ran until December 1965. APA cited four frame buildings at Swikshak Lagoon as its headquarters. [23]

The APA was an active clam harvester. During the summer of 1961, the company deployed 76 men to Katmai's beaches and yielded 410,117 pounds of razor clams. The company was probably also active in the monument in 1962, but not afterwards. Where production took place during those two summers is not known. One place it probably occurred was Kashvik Bay, because a contemporary map identifies an Alaska Department of Fish and Game cabin in the area. That cabin was probably used to monitor an ongoing clam harvesting operation. [24]

A 1963 planning report provided this overview of the Katmai coast's clam resources:

Kukak Bay has long been the site of a commercial cannery which sometimes lapses into disuse only to again be reactivated, for such commercial activities are marginal on the Katmai coast, owing primarily to distance and secondly to weather. This particular site is abandoned at present, but a larger cannery at Swikshak Bay is still in operation. This one is only about 5 miles from a major clam digging stretch of bay at Kaguyak. [25]

Little remains of the facilities that were associated with the various commercial clamming operations built in the 1940s or 1950s in Kukak and Swikshak bays. At Kukak Bay, portions of the old cannery on the southeast shore had burned down by 1941. In 1947, however, Alfred Kuehl's photographs show that the mess hall, bunk houses, manager's house, store, oil tank and wharf were clearly intact. [26] By 1953, however, an NPS report recommended that the "old cannery" be destroyed. By the time Superintendent Blinn arrived, the structures were "pretty well collapsed." [27] He advocated their destruction in

1973, but could not raze them until ownership could be determined. They still stood in 1985; the site that year was recommended as a tidewater ranger station. [28] At Swikshak Bay, 1947 photographs show that Cape Douglas's cannery complex contained one or two bunkhouses, a mess hall, and a wharf. As indicated by the APA's application to the BLM, four buildings were still intact in early 1961. By April 1972, however, Katmai personnel deemed them hazardous and unsightly, and they destroyed them all. [29]

Beginning in 1963, concerns about poisonous shellfish led the Alaska Department of Health and Welfare prohibited commercial use of clams, mussels, and similar shellfish taken from all Alaskan beaches. That prohibition remained until 1970. Once that ban was lifted, an active (if minor) clam harvesting industry continued on Katmai's beaches for another fifteen years. As noted below, however, the facilities associated with that industry were both temporary in nature and small in scale. [30]



Mainland Fisheries ran the last cannery operation at Kukak Bay. Victor Cahlane took this photo looking west in August 1953. The site was abandoned in 1954. *NPS Photo Collection, neg. 11,891.*

Katmai's clam industry roared back to life soon after health officials deemed the beaches as healthy again. A major factor contributing to the activity level was that the Swikshak area was one of only three beaches in the state that had been cleared for clam harvesting. [31] By 1971, approximately 200,000 pounds of razor clams were being harvested per year in the monument. The beaches, by this time, had become littered with shacks, wood stoves, debris, and discarded car bodies. In order to prevent the problem from reoccurring, all commercial clam permittees beginning in 1972 were required to erect only temporary shelters at their Swikshak Bay camps and were also required to remove all structures. [32] In 1973, harvesters visited both Swikshak Bay and Kamishak Bay. At the end of the 1973 season two structures remained standing at Kamishak. The first was a cabin used by Alaska Department of Fish and Game personnel who monitored the clamming operations (the cabin was apparently built that same year), and the second was that of a tardy clammer. [33] In order to clean up the accumulated refuse along Katmai's beaches, the monument's superintendent paid one of the clam diggers \$10,000 to barge the materials (including the Kamishak clammer's shack) back to Kodiak Island. [34]

Clamming permits issued in the following years contained a proviso prohibiting the construction of beach cabins; harvesters were required to live on a houseboat or barge. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, meanwhile, requested permission to build a permanent structure for its research and monitoring operations at Swikshak; this cabin was apparently built sometime during the mid-1970s. [35] Clamming operations during that period were restricted to Swikshak Bay. [36]

By 1977, the monument issued only one permit for clamming operations, to Daniel Konigsberg. The state maintained an active presence that year; it held a permit, valid until 1979, which allowed it to maintain a cabin at Swikshak for purposes of razor clam research. [37] From 1978 to 1981, the only clamming permit was issued to Jesus Briones, of Kodiak, who harvested at Swikshak Bay. Briones and Bruce Swanson, who applied for a joint one-year permit in 1982, were the last legal permittees. [38] In 1985, an illegal clam operation took place at Hallo Bay. The operators were cited, and they left soon afterwards. [39]

Historic Property Summary and Recommendations

As the narrative above has suggested, the beaches along Katmai's eastern shoreline have been the site of commercial salmon and clam harvesting for more than three-quarters of a century; many miles of Katmai's coastline have witnessed clam harvesting, and canneries have been located in several bays and lagoons. But both in southwestern Alaska and elsewhere, fish processing facilities have proven temporary, due both to environmental factors and the transient nature of the industry. A brief discussion of specific sites within the present park boundaries follows.

Kafila Bay was the site of a **seasonal saltery and store** (AHRs site number XMK-014) in the years leading up to the June 1912 volcanic eruption. Katmai and Douglas villagers camped here during the summer and beach-seined for salmon. The site, however, was buried by volcanic ash and has been uninhabited ever since.

Along the southern shore of Kukak Bay, a **salmon and clam cannery** (XMK-060) was constructed in early 1923.

Operations continued off and on for more than a decade. But the site was abandoned after the 1936 season, and by 1941, fire had partially destroyed the Kukak Bay cannery. Both the wharf and pilings there were found to be "in a bad state of repair" although the mess hall, bunkhouses, manager's house, store, oil tank and wharf were still intact. A new cannery operation commenced at the site in 1948 and continued until 1951, and by the early 1970s the

structures were "pretty well collapsed." A 1989 survey noted remains of several collapsed and partially standing buildings including the cannery facility (with plank flooring, ceiling and roof beams, and corrugated tin roofing), a possible bunkhouse (a long, narrow building with a row of rooms from end to end), and numerous historical artifacts such as steamers



Remains of the collapsed Quonset hut at Kukak Bay cannery, 1996. NPS-LAKA Studies Center Collection, 96:1:14:29.

and gear mechanisms, a bed frame and a possible stove with chimney. Due to the lack of structural integrity at the site, a historical archeology survey is recommended.

At Swikshak Bay, clam harvesting and both salmon and clam processing has taken place on the southeastern shore of Swikshak Lagoon. Clams were harvested there throughout the mid- to late 1920s, and during the 1930s, a salmon cannery was in operation. A September 1936 fire swept through and partially destroyed some of the Swikshak Bay facilities, although a mess hall, store-supply building, and bunkhouses survived the blaze. Cape Douglas Canning Corporation, which changed its name to Mainland Fisheries in 1948, operated the Swikshak cannery site (AFG-109). The company processed clams and later salmon and began operating on the same site in 1944. In the late 1940s a Quonset hut and other improvements were added at the site. In early 1961, four buildings at the site were still intact. By April 1972, however, NPS personnel deemed them hazardous and unsightly, and they destroyed all remaining standing structures. A 1989 survey, however, noted historic remains including a building foundation, burned timbers, concrete slabs, bottle glass and cans, a Jeep and two flatbed trucks. Due to the lack of structural integrity at the site, a historical archeology survey is recommended.

Katmai's coastline has had a number of other structures associated with fish processing, but most were temporary or too recent to be considered for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Perhaps a typical one was a small shack located along the northern shore of Kukak Bay in T21S, R31W, Sec. 36, NE. An NPS report compiled in the late 1960s described a "one room cabin erected probably by fishermen [and] constructed of plywood and gasoline cans." A ranger report written in 1984 included a photograph of the site and gave this description: "A wooden frame supports sheet metal walls and roof and inside an old wooden box, bed springs, and associated garbage remains." Five years later, historical archeologist Ty Dilliplane visited the site, calling it the "Point Jane Hut" (XMK-062). He described it as "a small possible hunter's hut, measuring roughly 9' x 7' the structure has a corrugated tin roof, plywood walls, wire nails, and wooden flooring. The structure also has a small window and a doorway to the right of the window. A single-size bed frame was found inside, along with a Wein Consolidated stub." (This last item may help date the cabin, inasmuch as Wein Consolidated Airlines operated only from 1968 to 1973.) [[40](#)]

Endnotes

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³ Harlan D. Unrau, *Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Alaska, Historic Resource Study* (Anchorage, NPS, 1994), 144, 147-48.

⁴ Dumond and VanStone, "Paugvik," p. 10.

⁵ Hussey, *Embattled Katmai* 216, and Unrau, *Lake Clark* 148.

⁶ Hussey, *Embattled Katmai* 331.

⁷ Don E. Dumond, "People and Pumice on the Alaska Peninsula," in *Volcanic Activity and Human Ecology*, 383; Patricia H. Partnow, "The Days of Yore: Alutiiq Mythical Time," in *When our Words Return; Writing, Hearing, and Remembering Oral Traditions of Alaska and the Yukon* (Logan, Utah State Univ. Press, 1995), 143).

⁸ Hussey, *Embattled Katmai* 329, 356.

⁹ Unrau, *Lake Clark* 155, 185; MacDonald, "Chronological History," 1951, 77.

¹⁰ James McBurney (Surf Canneries) to Harold Ickes, February 4, 1936, in "General 1930-38" file, KNM Box 1, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA DC.

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¹² Richard B. Nickerson, *A Critical Analysis of Some Razor Clam (Siliqua patula, Dixon) Populations in Alaska* (Juneau?, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, July 1975), 23; F. H. Oliphant, "Report on Clam and Salmon Packing" (brochure), c. 1924; F. W. Weymouth, H. C. McMillan, and H. B. Holmes, "Growth and Age at Maturity of the Pacific Ocean Clam, *Siliqua patula* (Dixon)," Document No. 984, in *Bulletin of the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries* 41, 1925 (Washington, GPO, 1927), 69th Cong., 1st sess., House Doc. 230, 201, 208.

¹³ U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, *Alaska Fishery and Fur-Seal Industries* (Washington, GPO), editions from 1924 through 1936; F. H. Oliphant, "Report on Clam and Salmon Packing" (brochure), c. 1924.

¹⁴ Robert F. Griggs to Ernest W. Sawyer, November 22, 1930, in National Geographic Society Collection; Hillory A. Tolson (Acting Director NPS) to Director USF&WS, February 24, 1944, in RG 79, Box 313, "Katmai - Concessions" file, NARA SB; Herbert Maier (Acting RD/R4) to Director NPS, December 14, 1949, in "Katmai-Permits" file, Box 313, RG 79, NARA SB; Fred W. Johnson (BLM) to Director NPS, August 28, 1946, in File 601, KNM Box 2, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA DC; A. C. Kinsley (USDI Division of Investigations) to Dale B. Whiteside, August 11, 1941, in File 602, Box 311, Entry 7, NARA SB.

¹⁵ Frank L. Beals (Under Refuge Manager, Alaska Game Commission, Fish and Wildlife Service) to Herbert Maier, NPS, November 1, 1944, in "General 1930-38" file, KNM Box 1, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA DC; Hillory A. Tolson (Acting Director, NPS) to Mr. Crouch, F&WS and Clinton H. Hartstrom, April 30, 1945, in "Katmai-Permits" File, Box 313, RG 79, NARA SB.

¹⁶ Hillory A. Tolson to Jones, March 27, 1946; Tolson to Clinton H. Hartson, April 9, 1946, at KATM.

¹⁷ Tolson to Jones, March 27, 1946; Warner W. Gardner (Assistant Secretary of the Interior) to Director NPS, December 12, 1946; Cape Douglas Canning Corporation to Acting Director, NPS, December 21, 1946; Warner W. Gardner, "Permit," January 28, 1947; all in File N1423 ("Fish, 1946-1959"), KATM; also see File 40-10 (1933-52), RG 101, ASA.

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¹⁹ Walter A. Fuhrer to Julius Krug, September 2, 1948, in "Katmai-Concessions" folder, Box 313, RG 79, NARA SB.

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²¹ Lowell Sumner, "Magnificent Katmai," *Sierra Club Bulletin* 37 (December 1952), 39; Darrell L. Coe, "Katmai National Monument," *National Parks Magazine* 40 (June 1966), 6; Paul Schumacher (Regional Archeologist, WRO) to Supt. MOMC, July 30, 1965, in File A2623, Ranger Patrol Reports, 1965-69, DENA. William C. King, of Kodiak, may also have been an active Katmai clam digger in 1950. King to A.C. Kuehl, March 13, 1950, in File 208, Box 311, KNM, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA SB.

²² BLM Permit 032198, at BLM State Office, Anchorage.

²³ BLM, "Special Land-Use Application and Permit," number 051596, Alaska State Office, Juneau.

²⁴ NPS, *Master Plan Brief for Katmai National Monument*, 1965, 17 (map).

²⁵ Sumner, *Special Report, Katmai Master Planning Field Study*, 1963, 33.

²⁶ Jack Benson (Kodiak AGC agent), notes on USGS, "Kamishak Bay-Katmai Region" (map), 1923, in File 601; also File 503 (photographs); both in KNM Box 2, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA DC.

²⁷ Everett L. Schiller, "Summary Report on Mammology," in *Interim Report, Katmai Project, Katmai National Monument, Alaska* (Washington, USDI, March 1954), 112; Blinn interview, August 26, 1988.

²⁸ HFC photo; SAR, 1973, 4; Melanie Neuman and Kim Heacox, *Katmai National Park and Preserve, Katmai Coast Field Season Report 1985*, 54. On Kukak Bay's north shore was also found a one-room cabin constructed of plywood and gasoline cans. The cabin was thought to have been constructed "by unknown individuals, probably fishermen." (It was probably unrelated to the old cannery.) By 1969, NPS personnel had recommended that the eyesore be destroyed and removed. What has become of it is unknown; it may have burned down at about the time of the 1969 report. Item #17, "Inventory of Backcountry Facilities and Structures," in Breedlove, 1969. Scattered reports note that many crude structures have been built by fishermen in recent years. NPS personnel, when they encounter them, have torn most of them down.

²⁹ SAR (KATM), 1972.

³⁰ Nickerson, *A Critical Analysis of Some Razor Clam Populations*, July 1975, 18, 28.

³¹ Blinn interview, August 26, 1988.

³² Wallace H. Noerenberg (Commissioner, Dept. of Fish and Game) to Gov. William A. Egan, November 1, 1971, in File NR/1-6, Series 88, RG 01, ASA; SAR, 1972, 2.

³³ SAR (KATM), 1973.

³⁴ Blinn interview, August 26, 1988.

³⁵ SAR, 1974, 2; Blinn interview, August 26, 1988.

³⁶ Gilbert E. Blinn, "Statement for Management, Katmai National Monument," September 15, 1976, in File D18, AKSO.

³⁷ SAR (KATM), 1977, 3-4; NPS, "Important Issues Concerning Wilderness Proposal for Katmai National Monument," February 24, 1977, in "Wilderness Katmai" file, Box 13, RG 79, NARA ANC.

³⁸ SAR (KATM), 1982; "Clam Digging" file, KATM; Morris interview, November 2, 1989.

³⁹ Melanie Neuman and Kim Heacox, *Katmai National Park and Preserve, Katmai Coast Field Season Report*, 1985, 2.

⁴⁰ Craig Breedlove, "Inventory of Backcountry Facilities and Structures," in *Preliminary Draft, Basic Data, Advance Master Plan/Wilderness Research, Katmai National Monument, Shelikof Strait-King Salmon, Alaska* (Anchorage, NPS), June 1969; Stroud and Fuller, 1984, 17; AHRs Site Form XMK-062.

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Katmai

Building in an Ashen Land: Historic Resource Study



CHAPTER 8:

TRAPPING AND OTHER SUBSISTENCE LIFEWAYS

IN MANY PARTS OF ALASKA during the early twentieth century, trapping was an important source of income for thousands of rural residents. The area in and around present-day Katmai National Park and Preserve was similar to much of the rest of Alaska in supporting these activities. From the 1920s through the 1940s, a number of individuals trapped in the rich fur-bearing Katmai country in the winter and worked as salmon fishermen at various Bristol Bay canneries during the summer.

To support their trapping lifestyle, these hardy, self-reliant individuals built cabins, ancillary structures, and traplines near lakes and rivers. Most of this construction took place in the northern and western portions of today's park. A 1931 expansion of the monument boundaries brought the trappers' way of life into conflict with the National Park Service's natural resource protection policies. This action eventually brought an end to the Katmai trappers' lifeway, and little trapping activity has taken place during the past fifty years. Although the time in which they were active was relatively brief, trappers were able to develop almost fifty cabins or cabin complexes within the present park and preserve boundaries. But evidence of their activity has been fleeting, and NPS cultural resources personnel have thus far identified in the field fewer than twenty of those sites.

Historical Trapping Patterns

Trapping and hunting in Katmai region has been traced back to prehistoric times, and during the historic period, trapping doubtless formed an integral part of the subsistence lifestyle of Katmai, Douglas, Savonoski, Kukak, and other area communities. (Some residents of those communities lived elsewhere during the summer; at the Brooks River mouth, for example, some Savonoski residents had long had a fish camp to take advantage of the remarkable salmon run.) Hunting, trapping, and fishing patterns in the Katmai region were dramatically altered by the June 1912 volcanic eruption. All settlements and camps were subsequently abandoned. Most residents no longer used monument resources, but those who were relocated to New Savonoski may have eventually drifted back into the monument and once again carried elements of their subsistence lifestyle. Other local residents, such as those from Naknek, never stopped coming to Katmai in order to participate in long-established traditional activities.

Most of the early National Geographic Society expeditions to Katmai approached the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes from Shelikof Strait, and in so doing they avoided the prime trapping country west of the Aleutian Range. But in 1919, an



A local resident (either Martin Monsen, Jr. or John Monsen), in this circa 1940 photograph, poses at a cache in the Naknek Lake country. *NPS-LACL Photo Collection, courtesy of Dorothy Berggren.*

expedition visited the newly-designated monument from the west, and on that trip, participants identified two rude trappers' cabins. One belonged to a man named Buckley at "Island Bay" near the portage to Lake Grosvenor, while the other cabin, belonging to "Mr. Grant," was located on the portage between Naknek and Brooks lakes. [1] (Alex Grant may have been the man being referred to; in 1918, Grant discovered gold along

American Creek.) The expedition members that year built a log cabin at the head of Naknek Lake to store goods during their trek to the volcanic area. That cabin remained for more than twenty years; more than a decade later, it was used by at least one trapper.

Before long an increasing number of men, primarily local residents, were attracted to the Katmai area's trapping possibilities. As noted in chapter 9, fur prices began to rise during and shortly after World War I, and the Katmai lake country—particularly the country surrounding Naknek and Brooks lakes—promised high trapping yields; as longtime Naknek resident Melvin Monsen noted, "In the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s, fur trapping was a more lucrative activity than was commercial salmon fishing in Bristol Bay waters." [2] By 1925, Stephen M. Scott had relocated to the area just south of Brooks River to commence trapping, and during the next six years four additional men—Verner Eckman, Roy Fure, John Hartzell, and John Monsen—also became actively engaged in the trade. [3] These men, all recently arrived immigrants, built one or more cabins as base camps for their itinerant lifestyle. These men typically trapped only during the seven- to eight-month winter when the pelts (commonly beaver and fox) were in peak condition. They would then return to Naknek. They would sell their furs at the R. Davey General Store, [4] and after the area's canneries reopened, they would spend the summer working as commercial fishermen. (Scott, in fact, was known as "Portland Packer Scotty" because he was affiliated with the Alaska Portland Packers cannery, which operated along the Naknek River from 1919 to 1933. [5])





When Paul Hagelbarger of the 1918 National Geographic Society expedition visited "Tom's Bay" (Lake Brooks), they encountered this barabara and cache. *University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives and Manuscripts Department, National Geographic Society Katmai Expedition Collection, Biox 4, 4104.*

In April 1931, a proclamation signed by President Herbert Hoover more than doubled the size of Katmai National Monument. The proclamation stated that the expansion was needed to protect "features of historical and scientific interest and for the protection of the brown bear, moose, and other wild animals." The monument, at that time, had almost no visitation; thus the proclamation had no immediate effect on the monument's megafauna populations. The monument's new boundaries were moved sufficiently far west that each of the five trappers noted above were included. But they and other Naknek residents had scant knowledge of the monument expansion, and conditions continued as before.

High fur prices, and a continuing, active cannery presence, induced other local residents to trap in the Naknek Lake country. In the next five years, at least nine new trappers became established. Those nine included Gunnar Berggren, Paul Chukan, Alfred Cooper, Harry Featherstone, John "Frenchy" Fournier, Sigurd Lundgren, Richard Mitchell, Martin Monsen, and a man named Karvonen. These men were both Natives and non-Natives, and both recent and long-term U.S. residents. Most if not all were Bristol Bay residents who divided their year between the trap lines and the canneries. [6]

Trappers Leave the Monument

The trappers' lifestyle became endangered, however, beginning in 1936. Early that year an Alaska Game Commission (AGC) agent out of Dillingham, Hosee R. Sarber, visited Naknek and was surprised to find that "quite a number of trappers" were operating in the Naknek Lake-Lake Grosvenor country, most of whom were unaware that they were doing so within a national monument. Spurred on by that discovery, the AGC began patrolling the monument's Shelikof Strait coastline and found "several violators operating in and adjacent to the park." Word of the violations eventually



found its way to NPS Director Arno Cammerer, but neither he nor anyone else could react to the problem until the Mount McKinley Superintendent agreed to dispatch a ranger to the area. But the visit was just a one-day flyover, and the trapping problem remained. As additional reports of violations continued to pour in, so the NPS asked the General Land Office to look into the matter. In January 1938, investigator A. C. Kinsley undertook the task. He visited Naknek that July and completed his report the following January. Kinsley, giving the trappers the benefit of the doubt, said that all those who had settled into the area prior to the 1931 proclamation had the legal right to continue living in the monument, even though they had never filed for legal rights to the land. But in an ironic twist, they were prohibited from trapping because that activity violated NPS regulations. Those who had entered the monument after the proclamation had no legal basis to either live or trap in the monument. [7]



Above: John "Frenchy" Fournier was a Katmai-area trapper during the 1930s; he was one of several who left the monument as a result of the Kinsley investigation. Photograph taken in 1923 by Alyce C. Anderson, a Naknek teacher. *Alyce Anderson Collection, LACL, courtesy of Theodore W. Anderson.*

When Supt. Frank Been and biologist Victor Cahalane visited the monument in the summer of 1940, they were pleased to discover no signs of active trapping; on the contrary, they saw several stripped cabins and abandoned caches. The trappers had apparently moved out of the Bristol Bay side of the monument. But as Cahalane soon discovered, the situation was different along Shelikof Strait. The biologist, along with an AGC agent, spent several days patrolling the coastline. He made no specific mention of active trappers; he did note, however, that it was "perfectly feasible for poachers to base their operations on any one of the numerous [offshore] islands while they may trap on the mainland of the monument with greatly enhanced chances of escaping detection." Cahalane, hoping to separate the legitimate fox farmers from any illegal trappers that might be in the area, suggested that the monument's boundary be extended two miles east into Shelikof Strait. But before the agency finalized its recommendation, it drafted the GLO's A. C. Kinsley to study the situation. Kinsley got the job in April 1941, and before long he discerned that only two men had any legal claims to the offshore islands: Earl Butler, whose Kiukpalik Island fox farm was legitimate (though of marginal economic benefit), and John A. Smith, who had acquired no foxes and otherwise seemed uninterested in fulfilling his fur farm lease. Kinsley, who relied for his information on visits by AGC agents, reported that Smith, under the guise of a fox farmer, was illegally trapping along the Shelikof Strait coastline. As a result of that investigation, Smith lost his fur farm lease in April 1942, and on August 4 of that year, President Franklin Roosevelt added all of the offshore islands to the monument. Those actions eliminated the trapping problem along the monument's eastern

shoreline. [8]



Believed to be Hammersly cabin complex, 1973. *LCS Katmai file, AKSO.*

Meanwhile, officials were beginning to discover that in the country west of the Aleutian Range, the quashing of trapping had been only temporary. With the onset of World War II and the resulting reduction in NPS funding, agency personnel had virtually no opportunity to see the monument for another five years, and in early 1947, a Fish and Wildlife Service agent informed the NPS that four men—one of whom was longtime trapper Stephen M. Scott—were living and trapping inside of the monument. The F&WS agent, with the NPS's blessing, arrested

all four of the trappers, who pleaded their innocence based on their lack of knowledge of the monument's boundaries. All were released, but the following year additional trappers—Kirk Adkinson, Henry Nelson, and Jim Marlette—were spotted and arrested. Adkinson, furthermore, was convicted and incarcerated. When an F&WS agent returned in 1949, trapping was as active as in previous years, and he found one cabin that had been extensively used for trapping. But the activity was clearly winding down. NPS officials have noted few problems with illegal trapping since 1950, when they established an on-site management presence at Brooks Camp. [9]

The monument, which was managed on a bare-bones budget until the late 1960s, may well have hosted illegal trapping activity from time to time, although there was little economic incentive to harvest furs during this period. During the 1970s, a resurgence of fur harvest took place throughout Alaska, fueled both by rising prices and a newly-emerging "return to the land" syndrome; historian Melody Grauman notes that the latter condition resulted "from an environmentally conscious society and a recognition of [the] lost values of self-sufficiency and rugged individualism." One person, in pursuit of those values, settled just outside of the monument and spent most of the decade trapping in the American Creek watershed. [10] But when President Carter's 1978 proclamation incorporated huge new areas into the National Park Service system, more than a million acres on the margins of "old" Katmai National Monument were closed to trapping, and the recently-established trapper was obliged to leave. [11] Carter's proclamation and the subsequent passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act meant, quixotically, that trapping would be prohibited in both the old (pre-1978) and new portions of Katmai National Park; the activity could continue, however, in the newly-designated Katmai National Preserve. Since 1950, few if any illegal trappers have operated in the park; thus trapping has had few significant impacts on park resources.

As the above discussion has suggested, trapping activity took place in many parts of the present-day park and was prevalent for many years, particularly between 1925 and 1940. Perhaps the best known of these is Fure's Cabin complex, built by Roy Fure in 1926, which in 1985 was entered onto the National Register of Historic Places. In recognition of its historic value, the NPS restored the cabin in 1987-88 and the remainder of the complex in 1993-94. [12] Almost all of the remaining cabins, however, have severely deteriorated, and the site of many former trapping cabins has not yet been relocated. Because trapping was

centered on three geographical loci, the various trapping sites will be discussed in that context.

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Katmai

Building in an Ashen Land: Historic Resource Study



CHAPTER 9:

REINDEER HERDING AND FOX FARMING

AT EXTREME ENDS of Katmai National Park and Preserve are located the remains of operations related to two distinctly different primary economic activities. At the northwestern end of the park are the dilapidated remains of a reindeer corral, while along two offshore islands in Shelikof Strait are ruins associated with former fox farms. Both activities began in Alaska in the late nineteenth century, and the legacy of both activities can be seen in many areas outside of the park boundaries. In the Katmai area, the primary impacts of the reindeer industry were felt in the early to mid-1930s, while fox farms (at least in an administrative sense) were most significant in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Reindeer herding will thus be considered first.

Reindeer Herding

Sheldon Jackson, the General Agent for Education for Alaska, was almost single-handedly responsible for the initial growth of Alaska's reindeer industry. Jackson, acting on a tip from a Revenue Cutter Service captain and a zoologist—both of whom were familiar with conditions in the Native villages of western Alaska—began importing Siberian reindeer in the early 1890s. Persistence eventually paid off, and by 1900 Alaska's reindeer population—owned and cared for, for the most part, by Alaska Natives—was doubling every three years. [1]

By 1904, reindeer herds had spread from the Seward Peninsula (where the first successful herds had propagated) to Bethel, and a happenstance event beginning in December of that year brought reindeer to the Katmai area. An Alaska Reindeer Service employee named Hedley E. Redmyer announced his intention to drive 300 Bethel-area reindeer 500 miles east to Copper Center, a small town north of Valdez. Having only a vague idea of how to proceed, Redmyer and his crew made it only as far east as the Lake Clark-Iliamna area. There he stopped, stymied by wolf country, rugged terrain, and the lack of moss for forage. He asked for, and received, permission to establish a government reindeer station at Kakhonak, on the south shore of Iliamna Lake. [2] The population of, and prospects for, Alaskan reindeer continued to grow, and by 1906 the Kakhonak reindeer population had almost doubled. The herd had grown geographically, too, some of the herd grazing south to Kukaklek Lake, within today's Katmai National Preserve. So bountiful was the reindeer population that, in 1909, a portion of the herd was driven to Koggiung, at the mouth of the Kvichak River, where a new station was established. In 1913 the Kakhonak herd was divided again when a new station was established at Iliamna Village, at the east end of Iliamna Lake.

By the 1920s, herds were being managed in many areas in and around the present-day park. By 1926, herds were being tended at both Egegik and Ugashik, southwest of the park, as well as in the Iliamna area; three years later, the same three locations boasted reindeer herds. No information is available regarding herds being managed within the park; in their

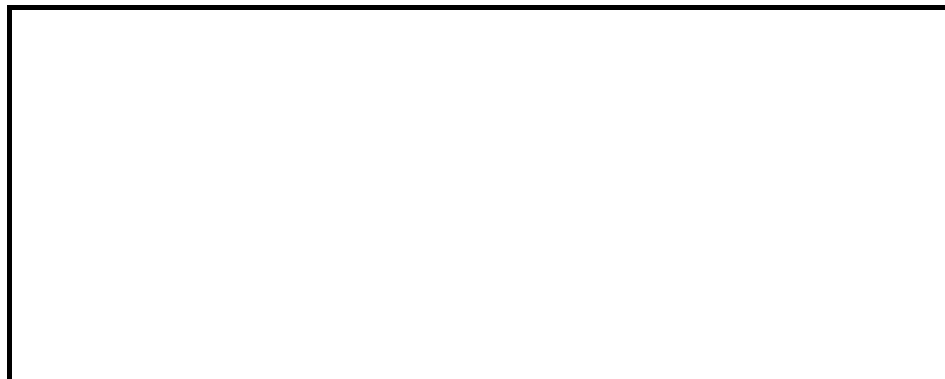
effort to improve the Natives' lot, government agents appear to have brought the reindeer herds to Native villages rather than locate herds in remote areas that may have offered superior browse. [3]

Reindeer management remained a vital aspect of life in southwestern Alaska villages during the early to mid-1930s, and it was during this period that the only known incursions of reindeer into Katmai National Park took place. According to Frank Been, who visited the park for several weeks in 1940, a herd of 10,000 reindeer had been brought "to the vicinity of the Naknek River sometime within the past 10 years," and that a portion of that herd "could graze into the north west corner of the park" that is, in the area west of Lake Coville and north of Naknek Lake. [4] At least one reindeer station was established in the monument at this time; it was located on Northwest Arm, near the northwestern end of Naknek Lake.

The area's reindeer population apparently remained healthy until 1936; it then declined dramatically. Two reasons have been given for the change. First, the December 1936 death of one of the area's chief reindeer herders meant that the herd was cared for less skillfully than before. A more plausible explanation, however, was that wage rates at the Bristol Bay-area canneries brought area Natives sufficient income that they did not have to depend on reindeer herding, a far less lucrative occupation. Within just two to three years, as a result, reindeer herding in the Iliamna-Katmai region was abandoned and the animals either assimilated with the wild caribou herds or were transferred to other stations. [5] By 1940, the herd had dissolved so completely that Frank Been, the 1940 visitor, was assured by his Fish and Wildlife Service host that there were no reindeer in or near the monument. Reindeer have not reentered the country since that time.

Fox Farming

Meanwhile, an activity of a far different sort—fox farming—was taking place at the opposite end of the monument. Fox farming, like reindeer herding, had begun in Alaska in the late 19th century; the first Alaska fox farm began in the Semidi Islands, southwest of Kodiak Island, in the 1880s, and by the mid-1890s an operation had begun on Long Island, along Kodiak Island's eastern coast. Because of a rising interest in the fox trade, the Long Island operation was being copied in other parts of the territory as well, and by 1900, 35 islands in southcentral and southeastern Alaska were being leased from the government. But in 1903, fur prices began to bottom out and many islands were abandoned. They remained low until about 1913, then they continued to rise for the next several years. By 1919 or 1920, prices had become sufficiently attractive that fox farming entered its "golden age," and throughout the 1920s, Alaska boasted several hundred fur farms. Most of these farms were on offshore islands, because an island was the easiest environment to manage a fox herd. Others, however, were located inland, usually in lacustrine or riverine environments. [6]





Fox farm on Kiukpalik Island, near Swikshak Lagoon. Photograph taken in 1953 by NPS biologist Victor Cahalane. *NPS Photo Collection (at HFC), negs. 11,830 and 11,832.*

During fox farming's "golden age," the first farms began to appear on the margins of the present park. In 1922, John Brodtkorb established a blue fox farm on Kiukpalik Island, a 390-acre island that was ten miles east of Swikshak Bay and slightly more than two miles from the coast. By 1924 he was living full time on the island, and in 1927 he filed for a fur farming lease in accordance with a recently-passed congressional act. By this time, he stated that he had invested more than \$10,000 in improvements on the property. In 1929, he obtained a ten-year fur farm lease for the island. About two years later, however, he left the island, only to be replaced in 1936 by Earl L. Butler, a Kodiak resident. The following year, the U.S. government issued to Butler a ten-year fur farm lease.

Shortly after Brodtkorb became established on Kiukpalik Island, another island off the Katmai coast became a potential fur farming site. In December 1928, Peter J. Voth obtained a ten-year fur farm lease for Takli Island, a 1,050-acre island located in Amalik Bay. Voth, however, never established a fox farm there, and in July 1931 the lease was canceled. A year later, Joe Tanzer filed a new application for a fur farm lease for the island. The lease application process, however, was never completed, and in June 1935 it was rejected.

Two years later a more serious applicant, John A. Smith, received a fur farm lease. But just a year later Interior Department investigator A. C. Kinsley visited the island. He discovered that the island lay less than a mile off the Katmai coast "and that it was possible that fox might escape to the mainland in severe Winters when ice may form sufficiently to permit the fox to escape," and he further discovered that Smith had not yet purchased any foxes. In order to satisfy the terms of the lease, Kinsley ordered him to do so, but when he and local Fish and Wildlife Agent Jack Benson returned to the island in July 1941, they found no evidence that such purchases had ever been made. They did, however, find considerable evidence of mink, marten, beaver and fox trapping. Kinsley noted that although Smith protested vehemently to the contrary, "Wildlife agent Benson is of the firm opinion that Mr. John A. Smith has simply used the fur farm lease for Takli island as a base for depredations upon the fur within the Katmai National Monument." Kinsley agreed with Benson's assessment.

The National Park Service, which had had authority over the coastline adjacent to Takli Island since 1918 and the Kiukpalik Island coastline since 1931, knew little about what had been going on in the monument during the 1920s and 1930s. But in 1940, two NPS officials spent several weeks in the monument, and while on that trip they became aware that trapping was taking place along the Shelikof Strait coastline. Kinsley's investigation, therefore, merely reconfirmed what had long been suspected.

Victor Cahalane, one of the Federal officials, had a ready solution to prevent further trapping: extend the monument's boundaries to include the offshore islands. Both he and Benson suggested that the line be extended two miles offshore; that proposal would have excluded Kiukpalik Island, because an active fox farm had been operating there for a number of years. Kinsley, asked to comment on the NPS's proposal, noted that John Smith and Earl Butler were the only two people who claimed land along the offshore islands. Smith, he noted, had failed to live up to the terms of his lease, and "Mr. Butler's success with this island [Kiukpalik] has been small." Based on Kinsley's report, Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes, in November 1941, recommended a five-mile boundary extension, which would include both Takli and Kiukpalik islands. He noted that "it would in no way be harmful to potential business enterprises in that general part of Alaska" because, he reasoned, the monument's extension would not affect existing fur farm leases. That recommendation was forwarded to President Roosevelt, who signed a proclamation on August 4, 1942 reflecting Ickes's proposal. [7]

Although Roosevelt's proclamation had no direct effect on either Smith's or Butler's fur farm leases, neither operation remained for long. Based on Kinsley and Benson's investigation, Smith was exposed as a trapper masquerading as a fur farmer, and soon afterward the two officials recommended that Smith's lease be cancelled. He lost his lease in May 1942. Butler, for his part, lost interest in his fur farm for entirely different reasons. By 1941, economic opportunities related to the World War II buildup had lured Butler to move to Kodiak Island, where he was engaged in construction work at the navy base. A medical condition also forced him to be away from the island. Those factors, plus his admittedly small success in the fur farm business—fur farms throughout the territory were faring poorly during this period—caused him to abandon his operation. Butler probably vacated the island either during or shortly after the war, although the Bureau of Land Management did not close his fur farm license until October 1950.

Historic Property Summary and Recommendations

The above sections detail activity that surrounded three park sites: one reindeer herding complex and two fox farming sites. But inasmuch as the Takli Island "fox farm" should more accurately be categorized as a trapping cabin, site information regarding Takli Island's historical resources are included in Chapter 8 which relates to the park's trapping context.

The **Northwest Arm reindeer corral and cabin** is located near the northern shoreline of Naknek Lake. The streamside complex, as suggested above, was near Mike



Remains of the Kiukpalik Island fox farm in 1996. Photograph taken by Mike Hilton. NPS-LAKA Cultural Survey Inventory file, KATM 96:1:20:24.

Shapsnikoff's cabin site. It was active during the 1930s and was doubtless abandoned by 1940. According to Mike Tollefson, a Katmai National Monument ranger whose 1977 study was based on interviews with local experts, more than one corral may have existed here; Steve Behnke, a subsistence specialist, notes that Pete Olympic was one of several reindeer herders who had used the facility. NPS personnel, thus far, have only an inexact idea regarding the complex's specific location. It is highly unlikely, however, that any standing structures remain. It is therefore recommended, after the site has been located, that NPS cultural resource personnel conduct a survey of the site's historical archeology.

The **Kiukpalik Island Fox Farm** (AHRS site number AFG-192) is located near the island's western shore and toward its northern end. In 1927, the applicant for the island's fur farm lease noted that the island had 100 blue foxes and that \$10,000 in improvements had been expended there. No specifics are available, however, regarding those improvements, and no evidence has surfaced that the following lessee, provided further improvements. When NPS biologist Victor Cahalane visited the island in 1953, he noted two residences, including a two-room cabin; three small structures for feed, pelt storage, etc., all in poor condition; and the remains of a 100' x 150' enclosure. A 1985 NPS coastal survey noted that the island's "cabins are still standing." But by 1990, these resources had significantly deteriorated. An archeologist that year noted six to eight remnants of buildings plus ancillary equipment, domestic artifacts, fence remains, and a few remnants of the former water and power system. Heavy vegetation, however, obscured many of the remaining cultural features.

Endnotes

¹ Joan M. Antonson and William S. Hanable, *Alaska's Heritage* (Anchorage, Alaska Historical Commission, 1985), 474-75.

² Harlan D. Unrau, *Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Alaska, Historic Resource*

Study (Anchorage, NPS, 1994), 309-11.

³ *Ibid.*, 311-15.

⁴ Frank T. Been, *Field Notes of Katmai National Monument Inspection* (November 12, 1940), 8.

⁵ Unrau, *Lake Clark* 316-17.

⁶ Linda Cook and Frank Norris, *A Stern and Rock-Bound Coast; Kenai Fjords National Park Historic Resource Study* (Anchorage, NPS, 1998), 112-13.

⁷ Frank B. Norris, *Isolated Paradise; An Administrative History of the Katmai and Aniakchak National Park Units* (Anchorage, NPS, 1996), 62-65.

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CHAPTER 10:

FISHERIES RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT

TODAY, BRISTOL BAY is widely known as having the world's most plentiful stocks of wild sockeye (red) salmon, and the Naknek River system that flows out of Katmai National Park has long been known as one of the primary contributors to the bay's salmon stocks. The many streams that flow eastward from the park into Shelikof Strait, and the upper reaches of the Alagnak River drainage system, also boast healthy salmon populations, though not to the extent of the Naknek River system. Commercial fisheries interests, not surprisingly, were quick to respond to the area's abundant salmon populations, and in order to preserve the salmon's long-term abundance, government scientists and regulators have had a long-term management presence in the Naknek drainage. These activities are manifested in the Lake Brooks Field Laboratory, the Brooks River fish ladder, and other cabins and structures that have been related to fisheries research and management.

Initial Management Activities

As noted in the Chapter 7, the first area canneries were located on Kodiak Island (east of the present-day park) and along the Nushagak River (northwest of the park) during the early 1880s. By the mid-1880s, the remarkable Bristol Bay salmon resource was becoming widely recognized, and in the 1890s salteries and canneries were located along the Naknek River, just west of the present park boundaries.

Shortly after World War I, fisheries managers began to enter the Katmai area. The U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, a predecessor agency to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, decided to undertake a predatory fish destruction program in the various major Bristol Bay tributaries. The agency undertook such a program because salmon, at that time, was the only fish desired by local canneries. Therefore, any species that preyed on salmon was considered undesirable, and trout were specifically identified for destruction. As part of that survey, the Bureau sponsored a broad survey of fish populations; the agency studied the Naknek River system as well as other major Bristol Bay drainages. In early June of 1920, a four-man party headed by A. T. Loeff of the College of Fisheries, University of Washington, began its Naknek Lake investigations.

Loeff and his crew quickly surveyed the margins of the lake and found that "practically all the fish entering [upstream into] Naknek Lake either pass up Kidawik Creek [Brooks River] or Simenoffsky [Savonoski] River." [1] Kidawik Creek, in particular, was judged to be "an ideal salmon stream with fine spawning bottom ... where good numbers of lake trout and some Dolly Vardens were taken." The party camped at the creek mouth, then ascended to "a waterfall



Salmon ascending Brooks Falls. Photograph by Steve Buskirk. NPS Photo Collection, slide 4970-2-5750.

from 5 to 8 feet high, over which it would be impossible for fish to ascend during low-water stage." In an attempt to improve its spawning possibilities, the crew proceeded to modify the north side of the falls. By using "several stone-cutting gads, a steel bar, top maul, hammer and pick," they made a cut "10 feet in width, sloping back about 15 feet, through which the fish could easily pass." The following year, a better-equipped crew returned to the site and used dynamite to widen the slot. [2] Brooks River, at this time, was not part of Katmai National Monument.

Fisheries crews returned to Naknek Lake and the Brooks River each year from 1920 through 1925; in 1924 and 1925, they also included Lake

Coville and Lake Grosvenor in their investigation. During that time, they killed more than 13,000 sport fish, primarily rainbow trout, lake trout, and Dolly Varden. The Bureau of Fisheries ignored Naknek Lake for the next decade. Below the lake, however, the Bureau remained active. In 1928, it established a fisheries station five miles upriver from Naknek, and maintained a salmon-counting weir at the site until 1932. [3]

In 1936, biologists showed renewed interest in the Lake Brooks area, which had been added to Katmai National Monument five years earlier. They noticed that Brooks Falls was not a block to red salmon under normal conditions. During seasons of low water, however, they observed that many died unspawned below the falls, presumably because of injury caused in attempting to negotiate them. Based on that overview, they made plans for "blasting steps in the falls" in the spring of 1937. Those plans, however, were put on hold for the time being. [4]

In 1938, concern about Japanese offshore fishing in the Bristol Bay area brought about a renewal of interest in Katmai's fisheries resource. Congress directed an investigation of the salmon fisheries of Bristol Bay. The plan, conceived in 1938, was to have one team of investigators in the bay tagging and marking fish, while land-based teams would set up operations along the five major bay drainages. The following year the Naknek River received a three-man team, which made a survey of the river system's major spawning grounds. [5] In 1940, the Bureau of Fisheries decided to concentrate their Naknek basin research efforts along the mile-long Brooks River. Fisheries personnel were well aware of the stream's abundant fish runs and felt that the stream was representative of others draining into Bristol Bay. [6]

Construction of Management Facilities

Because of the agency's decision to concentrate on the Brooks River fish runs, the first government building was constructed in what is now Katmai National Park and Preserve. As has been described in more detail below, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in 1941, began building a field laboratory at the eastern end of Lake Brooks. (That same year, F&WS personnel also built and began operating a second station just below the Naknek River rapids, a few miles southwest of Lake Camp.) Construction on the center section of the log Lake Brooks field laboratory was completed by the close of the 1943 field season. In addition, the agency constructed a salmon-counting weir and a rough road connecting Brooks and Naknek lakes. Based on those improvements, the agency carried on a successful fish research and management program, one that was to last at that location for more than thirty years.



Above: The Lake Brooks Field Laboratory is long associated with the federal fisheries investigations and research of the Bristol Bay watersheds as well as the Lake Brooks area. Looking at the south elevation in this 1957 photograph taken by Ranger Warren Steenburgh. *NPS-AKSO List of Classified Structures KATM file.*

Fisheries research in the Naknek drainage continued during World War II. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel at the Brooks River weir counted escapements into Lake Brooks of 97,496 sockeye salmon in 1940, 125,948 in 1941, 360,899 in 1942, 272,929 in 1944, and 184,319 in 1945. [7] Construction of a wooden weir each year allowed fisheries personnel to make an exact fish count; the weir was set up and removed each season.

At war's end, F&WS biologists began tagging studies on Brooks River and aerial spawning ground surveys on the entire Bristol Bay watershed. "Index areas" were identified on each of the main river systems and photographed each year. Researchers then counted fish in the photographs and, as before, developed annual statistics. [8] Throughout this period, the National Park Service had only the vaguest idea of what Fish and Wildlife Service personnel were doing along the Brooks River and elsewhere in the monument.

No sooner had the F&WS become involved in managing the Naknek River drainage's fish runs than they also became active managers of the salmon resources along the monument's eastern shoreline. The U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, the F&WS's predecessor agency, had established a Kodiak office in 1924, and ever since, the agency had made intermittent studies of



Current appearance of the Laboratory as it faces the lake. 1998 photograph taken by Janet Clemens. *NPS-LAKA Studies Center*.

the salmon spawning areas along the monument's eastern shore. In 1941, the Alaska Game Commission agent at Kodiak noted that the Bureau of Fisheries (which had become part of the

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the year before) had two watchman's cabins on the south side of Kafia Bay. Why they were located there is uncertain; because there were no fish traps in the area, the cabins were probably associated with a salmon research study. [9] As noted above, salmon (and clams) had been processed at nearby Kukak Bay from 1924 to 1932 and from 1935 to 1936; thus agency management activities were probably related to that commerce. [10]

The Fish and Wildlife Service made no overt moves to manage the fishery along the monument's eastern shoreline for the remainder of the 1940s. The agency, instead, focused its management activities at its Lake Brooks field laboratory and at other sites within the salmon-rich Naknek River drainage. Recognizing the value of the Brooks River salmon run, agency personnel made repeated attempts to construct a fish ladder to circumvent eight-foot-high Brooks Falls. As noted above, the Bureau of Fisheries had initially proposed a fish ladder in 1937, and in the early 1940s new plans emerged for the project. But the latter attempt was foiled due to a reduction in personnel caused by the onset of World War II. [11]

In 1947, engineers and biologists at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Montlake Laboratory at Seattle unveiled a new proposal for a Brooks River fish ladder. Unencumbered by financial or personnel difficulties, the agency's proposal was quickly put into action. The following year, a four-man crew arrived at the site and began constructing a ladder on the south side of the falls; the ladder had seven pools, each one foot above the other. Construction took more than two years, and the ladder opened on August 7, 1950. Willie Nancarrow, who was serving as Katmai's NPS ranger that summer, reported that "in the next week a marked increase in the number of fish going through the weir could be seen." [12] Some NPS officials were chagrined that the F&WS had built the facility without the NPS's permission; Regional Director Owen Tomlinson, for example, protested that "this structure hardly complies with Park Service principles relating to the preservation of natural structures." [13] But the F&WS insisted upon the right to continue using the structure. The fish ladder remained in operation for more than twenty years.

For the remainder of the 1950s, the agency vacillated from year to year in the interest it showed toward Bristol Bay research efforts. Funding during some years allowed tagging programs, foot and photograph surveys, and similar research efforts. But during other years, the F&WS decided to focus its Alaskan research efforts away from Bristol Bay. The Brooks River weir counts continued, but most other western Alaskan investigations were placed on hold. Regardless of funding levels, the agency continued to staff the Lake

Brooks field laboratory and maintain the adjacent weir. [14]

The first scientific look at the sport fishing potential of and assessment of sport fishing pressures in the area came in 1954. At the request of the NPS, John Greenbank of the F&WS did a sport fish survey of Katmai National Monument. Greenbank and assistant Ronald Lopp worked through the summer of 1954 and described monument waters, examined fish distribution and abundance, sampled fish populations, and conducted creel censuses in various locations. Overall, the survey found fish populations high and fishing pressure light. Most fishing within the monument occurred in Brooks River. [15] In retrospect, the work was particularly significant because neither the NPS nor the F&WS conducted significant research into Katmai's sport fish populations in the two decades following Greenbank's survey work.

Diversification of Fisheries Research

In 1960, commercial fisheries research in the monument underwent a major change when the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries decided to expand its fisheries research from Brooks River to the entire Naknek drainage system. The Lake Brooks field laboratory became a coordinating center, and to provide for its expansion, new housing was needed. Just south of the field laboratory, the BCF constructed two 28' x 36' four-room log cottages along with a 12' x 20' log garage. [16]

By 1962, studies were being conducted at remote sites within the monument, and to support those studies, the agency built several remote cabins in the monument. By 1965, the agency had built one at the east end of Lake Coville, just west of NCA's Grosvenor Camp, and it had occupied another cabin located two miles above the mouth of American Creek. [17] A third BCF cabin, located at the southeastern end of Lake Grosvenor, was built in the late 1960s. In 1969, it was described as a plywood one-room tent frame type cabin with two adjacent storage sheds which was being used for anadromous fish research. All three temporary camps were still active in 1971. The BCF, during the 1960s and early 70s, also had fish weirs and counting fences on Hardscrabble Creek and at the outlet of lower Kafia Bay. Therefore, the agency probably erected rude shelters of some sort at those locations. By 1971, each of these shelters had probably been abandoned. [18] Meanwhile, the salmon counting activities along the Brooks River were discontinued after the 1967 season, and the fish weir was removed for the last time; those activities had been the mainstay of the BCF's work for more than 25 years. [19]

A continuing sore point that marred relations between the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service throughout the 1950s and 1960s was the Brooks River fish ladder. Throughout the 1950s, for example, the NPS wanted to get rid of it, while the F&WS defended it. [20] In the mid-1960s, the NPS formalized its principles of aquatic management, which led to an immediate push to do something about the Brooks River fish ladder. The F&WS fought the prospect. [21] Park Service field personnel, however, continued to raise the issue, noting in 1970 that when the ladder was open it greatly reduced the number of salmon that could be seen trying to leap the falls. [22] In 1973, they blocked the ladder's upstream exit with wood planks. It remained blocked for years afterward. But some water now passes through the ladder, and intermittent fish passage occurs.

In 1970, the Fish and Wildlife Service split into two parts: the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The work at Katmai, which had been administered by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, was transferred to NMFS. The new agency continued the work of the old. In 1973, NMFS conducted the

second year of a Naknek Lake salmon incubator project and also conducted limnological and biological sampling of the lake system. The following winter, however, the incubators froze and the project was abandoned. NMFS did not staff the Lake Brooks field laboratory in 1974 or thereafter. [23]

To a large extent, NMFS ignored the monument during the mid-1970s. In 1976, the agency began allowing NPS personnel to use the Lake Brooks cabins. The following spring, it decided to transfer its facilities to the Park Service. In 1979 the NPS, under the direction of interim superintendent Roy Sanborn, rehabilitated the two Lake Brooks cottages, and the Lake Brooks field laboratory—then known as the Lake Brooks National Marine Fisheries Research Station—was converted into a residence. That summer, and each summer since, NPS personnel have used the buildings. [24]

The various remote NMFS structures have not fared as well. The primitive cabin at the east end of Lake Coville remained active as part of a salmon fisheries research project until 1972. By the following year, however, it was "not fit for habitation without minimal repairs" and was abandoned. In 1985, NPS rangers lived in the cabin, which by then was dilapidated. The cabin was torn down the following year. Along American Creek, the former BCF cabin remained active from 1963 through 1970 but was afterward abandoned. The cabin at the southeast end of Lake Grosvenor was also used for only a short time. It was abandoned in the early to mid-1970s. [25]

Although most of Fish and Wildlife's facilities in Katmai were established on the Bristol Bay side of the monument, the bureau was also concerned with the Shelikof Strait fishery. Prior to statehood, it claimed jurisdiction of all areas below the mean high tide line. (It also, as noted above, claimed jurisdiction over commercial fish throughout the monument.) It carried out occasional patrols in the strait during the 1950s. In addition, the F&WS made scattered attempts to monitor the fisheries resources on the monument's eastern shore. The agency still maintained its watchman's cabins on Kafil Bay, and in the summer of 1953 the agency stationed a salmon-stream guard in a tent about one mile south of the Kaguyak Village site. Both improvements may have been erected in conjunction with a nearby fish trap. [26] The agency, during the 1950s, may also have been active on other portions of the coastline.

After statehood, much of the fisheries management along the Shelikof Strait was transferred to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The ADF&G sought a site from which it could manage, survey, and patrol the salmon and clam fisheries along the monument's eastern coastline, and in March 1962 it obtained a ten year Special Use Permit from the NPS for a site on Kashvik Bay, up to three acres in extent, in which to erect one or more field structures. By June, the ADF&G had decided to erect a weir, cabin, and storage shed at the site. Agency personnel used the cabin for the next several years as a base camp for monitoring and patrolling the area. [27]

At Amalik Bay, twenty miles northeast of Kashvik, the state erected a small fueling station in 1962. [28] That may have been the same structure as a 16' x 16' cabin that the ADF&G built during this period in the bay's northwestern cove. Supervisory fish biologist Jack Lechner, then stationed at Chignik, used the cabin to establish a field headquarters for the studying of salmon smolt each spring. Ever since that time, Kodiak-based fisheries agents have used the cabin each March to perform pre-emergent salmon smolt counts. Its continuing utility was reinforced by the decision, in 1985, to replace the cabin's roof, reinforce several walls and to perform other cabin rehabilitation activities. [29]

Since the mid-1970s, both the National Park Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game have undertaken a wide range of fisheries management projects within Katmai's

boundaries, and additional research into the area's offshore fisheries resources has been undertaken by both the NPS and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Most of those studies, however, required nothing more than temporary tent camps by agency field personnel, and no permanent buildings have been constructed in recent years to support fisheries research or management activities.

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CHAPTER 11:

TOURISM AND EARLY PARK MANAGEMENT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM in Katmai is intertwined with the active management of Katmai National Monument by the National Park Service (NPS). Beginning in 1950, the park concessioner's development of fishing camps and visitor services served, directly or indirectly, as a catalyst for NPS to establish its first ranger in the monument, thirty-two years after the monument's creation. The original concessioner's fishing camps were comprised of wall tents that were later replaced with prefabricated wooden cabins. NPS's first permanent (all-wood) buildings in Katmai were a ranger station and a boat house, both located at Brooks Camp.

Between 1956 and 1968, the major tourist-related improvements that are seen in the park today were erected. The concessioner improvements included new lodges and guest cabins at three camps and one lodge at a fourth camp. During the summer of 1962, NPS Mission 66 funding provided for a 22-mile road from Brooks Camp to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes; three Panabode cabins used for housing, and a fourth Panabode placed at Three Forks Overlook as a visitor facility; and the construction of various short trails leading from both Brooks Camp and Three Forks Overlook. [1] While Katmai's visitors during the 1940s and 1950s were almost exclusively sport fishermen, the construction of the so-called Valley Road helped attract non-fishing tourists and signaled the beginning of Katmai as a significant general-purpose tourist destination.

Early Tourism Patterns

Katmai National Monument was proclaimed in 1918, primarily as a scientific preserve at the behest of the National Geographic Society. Because the monument was remote from existing transportation routes, it had few visitors, and because the monument's resources were in little danger of degradation, the NPS completely ignored the area. Prior to the 1960s, the budget for all of the country's national monuments was miniscule, and for more than thirty years after its establishment, virtually no money was spent to develop or manage Katmai National Monument.

During the 1920s, a handful of Katmai visitors used Kodiak as a jumping off point, just as the earlier National Geographic Society expeditions had done. Tourists typically crossed the forty-mile wide Shelikof Strait in small boats. Despite NPS plans to develop an access road in the mid-1920s, funding did not follow. The advent of aviation provided new opportunities for tourists to fly into the monument beginning in the late 1920s. Early tours of volcanic country were provided by Anchorage Air Transport and



Fishing at Katmai. Photograph by Standart.
NPS Photo Collection, slide 3670-33-5250.

Anchorage-based Pacific International Airways. Beginning in the late 1930s, Bristol Bay Air Service and independent pilot John Walatka offered tours as well.

Pressure for NPS to take a more active role in the monument began following the 1931 monument boundary expansion. Reports of illegal hunting, trapping and fishing activities in the monument brought about a cooperative agreement that delegated hunting and trapping enforcement regulations to the Alaska Game Commission. In 1937, the first NPS Katmai patrol occurred; it amounted to a one-day flyover in which landings were made at Lake

Brooks and at Savonoski. With lack of funds to provide a ranger staff, NPS had to rely on the cooperation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to patrol Katmai for many years. Three years later, Mount McKinley National Park Superintendent Frank T. Been and wildlife biologist Victor Cahalane visited the monument on a more extensive trip. In a report on that trip, Been made a particular note about the Katmai country's beautiful lakes and splendid trout fishing; he also noted, however, that its remoteness precluded it from becoming a tourist center for many years. [2]

What Been could not have foreseen was the influx of military personnel that would soon be using the monument. In 1941, the U.S. Army Air Corps established Naknek Air Base at a location fifteen miles east of Naknek. (This site was renamed King Salmon Air Station in the 1950s.) Before long, two military recreation camps were constructed as well. Naknek Recreation Annex No. 1, also called Rapids Camp, was located and at the foot of Naknek River Rapids, while Annex No. 2, called Lake Camp, was located near the western outlet of Naknek Lake. The growth of these camps had little effect on the monument's fish populations, but the new access created by the air base brought hundreds of military and construction personnel into the monument; they flew in on small floatplanes to access rainbow trout fishing areas throughout the upper Naknek drainage. Charter aircraft services, particularly after the war, also flew growing numbers of sportsmen into the monument. [3] Despite that upswing in interest, the Katmai country prior to 1950 attracted only the hardest, most independent fishermen.

Establishing the Concession Camps

Throughout this period, the National Park Service's presence in Katmai was limited to occasional site visits, hampered as it was by lack of funding and agency direction. The agency was under an increasing amount of pressure to develop the monument in some aspect. The movement to supply visitor services and accommodations, however, came not

from the NPS but from an airline executive, Raymond I. Petersen, who in late 1949 laid out a plan to set up a series of five tent camps in the lake country west of the Aleutian Range. Two of those camps—at Brooks River and Lake Grosvenor—would be located in the monument. The NPS wisely recognized that Petersen's proposal offered both tourist accommodations and access, and in March 1950 it signed a five-year concessions contract for his fledgling Northern Consolidated Airlines (NCA) tourism business. In less than three months, Petersen built all five tent camps; Brooks Camp, the linchpin of his system, opened its doors to its first visitor on May 31, while guests arrived at Coville Camp somewhat later. The other three camps—Battle Lake Camp, Kulik Camp and Nonvianuk Camp—were located outside the monument boundaries; they were absorbed into Katmai National Park and Preserve when the Alaska Lands Act became law in 1980.

Petersen intended that the five tent camps would appeal to fishermen, primarily if not exclusively. The camps, therefore, were essentially rustic facilities—a series of tent frames covered by olive drab-colored G.I. tent material. Most of the construction materials were precut elsewhere before being flown into the camps. [4]

Brooks Camp, the largest of the NCA camps, was located just north of the Brooks River mouth, on Naknek Lake. The camp began as an eight- or nine-tent guest and employee complex. Most of the guest tents were nine feet square. As visitation grew during the decade, the number of guest tents grew, and by the end of the decade the camp boasted 22 buildings, including a 32' x 16' cookhouse, a bathhouse, a powerhouse, a storage shed, and a root cellar. Brooks, alone among the NCA camps, offered running water, flush toilets, and shower baths. [5]

Coville Camp, located along the narrow peninsula separating Coville and Grosvenor lakes, originally consisted of one 16' square cookhouse, at the south end of camp, along with one large and four smaller guest tents, a pump house, and a root cellar. In 1954, Dr. Gilbert Hovey Grosvenor—the longtime editor of the *National Geographic Magazine* and a major player in proclaiming the original (1918) monument—visited the site, and to commemorate their visit, Petersen changed the facility's name to Grosvenor Camp. The site has borne that moniker ever since.

Kulik Camp was originally located along the western shoreline of Kulik Lake, just north of its outflow into Kulik River. Due to prevailing high winds at the site, however, the camp was abandoned after its first year of operation and moved to its present site, a 10.64-acre tract located south of Kulik River and along the eastern shoreline of Nonvianuk Lake. (Ruins of the original camp may still be found.) The present camp, consists of one 16' square mess hall and kitchen, two other 16' square sleeping quarters, four 9' square sleeping quarters, and a root cellar. [6]

Battle Lake Camp, on a 3.98-acre site at the northern tip of the present park, originally consisted of one 16' square mess hall and kitchen, 2 other 16' square sleeping quarters, five 9' square sleeping quarters, and a pumphouse. The camp is located on the northeastern side of Battle River at the Battle Lake outflow.

Nonvianuk Camp is a 2.36-acre parcel located at the western end of Nonvianuk Lake. It is the smallest of the five NCA camps and the only one that is presently in Katmai National Preserve. NCA established the camp adjacent to the Hammersly Cabin complex; prospector Rufus K. "Bill" Hammersly had operated out of the site since 1938, and he helped operate the camp during its first few seasons. Facilities at the camp originally consisted of one 16' square tent, which served as a mess hall and kitchen, and two 9' square sleeping quarters.

During the spring of 1950, Northern Consolidated Airlines was not the only entity

preparing to establish a presence in Katmai National Monument. Once the concessions contract had been signed, NPS officials recognized that the agency needed to establish a presence there both to provide information and to ensure that monument users followed NPS regulations. The Superintendent of Mount McKinley National Park, in response, budgeted \$2,000 for Katmai operations, and assigned a seasonal ranger, William Nancarrow, to patrol Katmai. Nancarrow arrived at Brooks Camp about July 1. As one of his first tasks in his new assignment, Nancarrow built a two-room wall tent, a cache, and a well. All were located at the present Brooks Camp campground, which is one-half mile north of the Brooks River mouth.

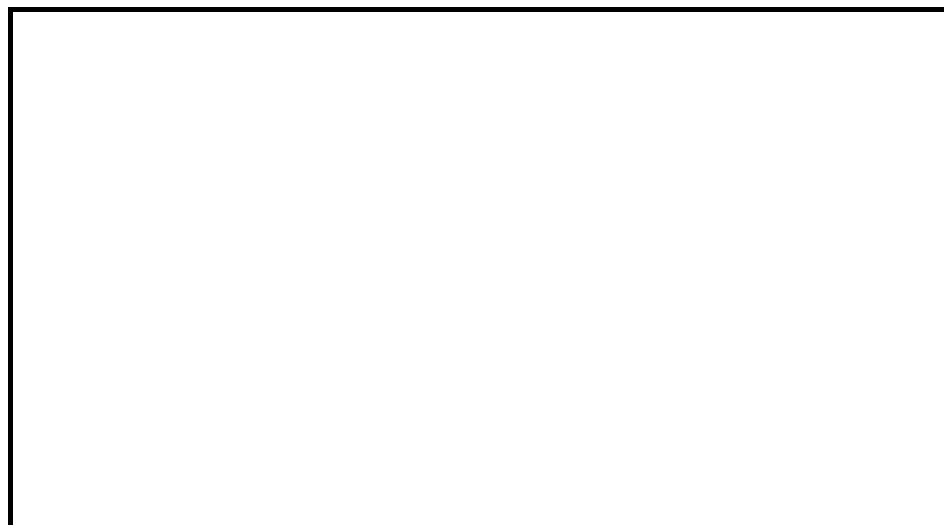
Facilities Development During the 1950s

Ray Petersen, NCA's president, and John Walatka, the company's superintendent of camp operations, cooperatively managed the five Katmai-area camps. The duo quickly recognized that the camps were commercially successful, and visitation to the camps grew consistently between 1950 and 1960. The three southernmost camps—Brooks, Grosvenor, and Kulik—were better suited for tourism growth than the other two, and in recognition of that fact, Petersen and Walatka decided to undertake a gradual improvement program.

Three primary elements constituted NCA's improvement program. First, most if not all of the camps' wall tents were replaced by plywood boards, then overlaid by asphalt shingling; second, new wooden buildings were constructed either of prefabricated, simulated log "Panabode" material or of locally-planed lumber; and third, attempts were made to improve access to the camps.

Structures made of Panabode material were constructed at several camps. In 1956 at Brooks Camp, NCA erected a combination store, office, and manager's quarters; it measures 20' x 24' and remains today. The following year, NCA constructed a similar Panabode structure at Grosvenor Camp. The combination manager's office, residence, and lounge measures 32' x 22'. By early 1960, further improvements at Grosvenor Camp included a bath house, two cabins of Panabode-styled cedar, four log buildings, six tent-covered structures, and a power house. [7] At Kulik Camp, NCA officials decided not to construct new buildings out of Panabode material; instead, they installed a sawmill and planing mill in 1956, and before long they began to prepare the materials to be used in the camp's large lodge building. The lodge was completed by 1960. The wood used in the camp's store and garage, completed somewhat later, also came from the nearby sawmill, as did the lumber for the Nonvianuk Camp lodge, located at the far end of Nonvianuk Lake.

[8]





Kulik Camp during the late 1950s included the lodge and a few tent frames covered with asphalt shingling. *Wien Collection, AMHA.*

In order to improve access to the camps, NCA applied pressure along two fronts. At Brooks, it made repeated attempts to build an airstrip south of Brooks River. In 1954, it notified NPS officials that it demanded an airstrip in order to justify the construction of an expanded lodge facility. NPS Director Conrad Wirth, however, demurred. The construction moneys promised by Mission 66 gave renewed hope that an airstrip might be built, but agency officials were unwilling to expend funds under this program in such a remote, little-used monument. At Kulik, however, NCA had better luck. The company, because its facility was located outside of Katmai National Monument, had no difficulties in obtaining permission from the Bureau of Land Management to build an airstrip. In 1954 it roughed out a 1,500-foot gravel airstrip, which was lengthened to 2,000 feet the following year. Several years later, NCA decided to fly Fairchild F-27B propjets into Kulik, so it doubled the runway's length. Company officials were well aware that the new, longer runway exceeded the 80-acre allotment for which NCA had originally applied, but they waited several years before taking any action to legally justify its existence. [9]

The National Park Service, partly in response to NCA's increasing presence, also moved to establish new facilities in the monument. Most were located in or near Brooks Camp. Facilities constructed during the 1950s included a ranger station and a boat house.

NPS plans to build a ranger station began during the summer of 1954 when logs were cut, peeled, and placed to dry for use the following spring at Brooks Camp. By February of 1955, NPS ordered building materials from Seattle and arranged for delivery to King Salmon by a Fish and Wildlife vessel. In July 1955, NPS personnel completed the



Brooks River Ranger Station, the first permanent NPS station in the park. NPS List of Classified Structures 1993 site visit. *NPS-AKSO LCS KATM file.*

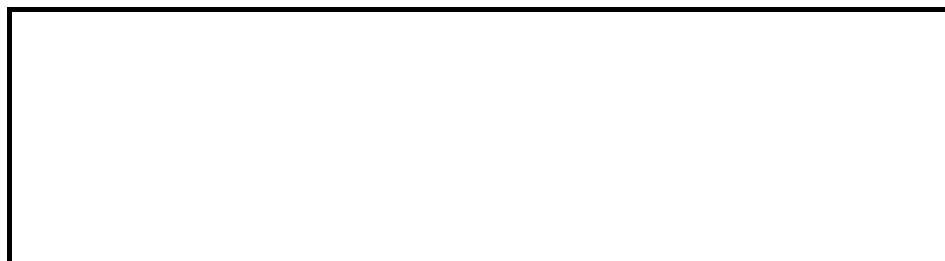
ranger station, and soon afterward, the seasonal ranger in charge of monument operations, Dick Ward, disassembled the wall tent and cache where he had been living (one-half mile north of Brooks Camp) and moved into the new facility. At this time, the

interior plumbing and cabinetry work had yet to be completed. This was the National Park Service's first permanently built structure in Katmai and its first ranger station, thirty-seven years after the monument had been established.

During the late 1950s, NPS staff added a generator shed, storage cache, fuel tank and weather instrument shelter at Brooks Camp. The log storage cache was placed in front of the ranger station, and although the original is gone, a replacement stands in the same location. The rangers also constructed two trails nearby.

NPS Katmai rangers built the boat storage house around 1960. During summer 1958, the rangers secured and stored building materials in sufficient quantity to construct a "small warehouse" at Brooks Camp for the following year. The boat house [10] was probably built during the summer of 1959, inasmuch as the building was complete when Ranger-in-Charge Robert Peterson first arrived at Brooks Camp in the spring of 1960. The Boat Storage House provided needed storage space and has taken on multi-use functions over the years. It has served as a winter storage area for agency watercraft, in the summer of 1963 it was used for visitor interpretive talks, and in 1964 it was being used as a VIP residence. Later uses include a visitor contact station and its current function as a ranger station.

The ranger station (BR-1) and boat house (BR-38), as originally constructed, complement each other in several ways: they are approximately the same size and shape; they exhibit the same use of materials (local logs painted or stained dark brown, with green metal roofs that were later changed to natural color wood shingles); and they have the same type of windows. The cabins, consistent with the Rustic Style, reflect similar cabin construction, materials and colors found in other national parks, including those at Mount McKinley National Park (now Denali National Park and Preserve), from where Katmai rangers were assigned.





The Brooks River Boat Storage House is located close by and similar in appearance to the Ranger Station. NPS List of Classified Structures 1993 site visit. *NPS-AKSO LCS KATM file.*

Expansion of Improvements Since 1960

Both the NCA and the NPS erected gradual improvements during the 1950s. During the winter of 1959-1960, however, NCA president Ray Petersen met with Mount McKinley Superintendent Samuel King and announced that in return for a twenty-year contract, he intended to "plan and finance substantial improvements of facilities in the Monument in order to accommodate the rapidly expanding tourist demand." King liked the idea of a twenty-year contract and gave that opinion in a letter to his superior. Petersen, meanwhile, got ready to move building materials to the Monument while the ice on the lakes still held. (Higher-ups, it turned out, refused to accept Petersen's contract idea; a year later, the NCA and the NPS signed a five-year contract.)

NCA spent much of the summer of 1960 constructing new facilities. By the spring of 1961, company personnel had completed building the mess hall portion of Brooks Lodge (BRC-19), which measured 50' x 24'. (A 20' x 20' kitchen was added on soon afterward.) The construction project also included seven 12' x 14' guest cabins (BRC-20-27) at Brooks Camp and one cabin at Grosvenor, as well as "a large approved cess pool," a power plant, and a new water system. A combination comfort station and bathhouse was constructed in the summer of 1961.

New NPS improvements took place in and around Brooks Camp in 1962, in large part because of a discussion held in February 1961 between NCA President Ray Petersen, NPS Director Conrad Wirth, and Alaska Senator Ernest Gruening. Before that meeting, the NPS had made no moves to expend Mission 66 funds on Katmai, one of the least-visited units in the NPS system, in part because Petersen's company held such influence over the monument. Gruening, however, angrily told Wirth that "you don't treat a constituent [Petersen] like this," and Wirth reluctantly agreed to fund certain improvements. Central to Petersen's plan was a 22-mile road that would allow Brooks Camp visitors to easily access the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. That road was constructed during the summer of 1962. In order to house the construction workers, three Panabode cabins were built in Brooks Camp that year, and a warehouse was built in 1963. Other improvements that

followed in the wake of road construction included a 24' x 28' reception center at Three Forks Overlook (at the southeastern end of the Valley Road) and various area hiking trails.

As a direct result of the facility upgrade at Brooks Camp, and the construction of the Valley Road, Katmai began to appeal to general visitors as well as sport fishing enthusiasts. Annual visitation began to increase dramatically—from less than 350 in 1962, to more than 1,000 in 1967, to more than 10,000 in 1970. These new visitors demanded the construction of a number of new structures; those built in the 1960s included a ten-unit guest-cabin complex (called the Skytel), constructed in 1964-65, and two NPS employee guest cabins, built in 1967. Another structure worked on in 1967 was the reconstruction of a prehistoric house (the Brooks River barabara) just west of Brooks Camp. Only two or three additional buildings were constructed at Brooks Camp during the 1970s: they include an auditorium and a generator building. Few buildings were constructed at the other Katmai camps during the 1960s or 1970s. Since 1980, many additional buildings have been constructed at Brooks Camp and the other Katmai camps—some by the concessioner, others by the NPS—but they will not be discussed here.



View of the Brooks Camp prefabricated Panabode guest cabins, built between 1960 and 1961. Looking northwest to Dumpling Mountain in 1971. *Wien Collection, AMHA.*

During the 1960s, the NPS became aware of two new camps in the area. As noted above, the Army Air Corps had established two camps near its King Salmon facility during the 1940s: Rapids Camp, along the Naknek River, and Lake Camp, at the western end of Naknek Lake. Facilities at Lake Camp, over the years, grew to include a 16' x 40' Yakutat hut (presumably used as a barracks), two Quonset huts, several corrugated metal shop buildings, a dock, and a building used as a barracks, mess hall, and recreation hall. The camp, therefore, had been developing for more than twenty years when Congress, in January 1969, decided to expand Katmai's boundaries to the westward to include portions of Lake Camp. The monument expansion apparently had no effect on the camp or its activities. When the camp closed, in 1976, the buildings were abandoned. Two years later, on December 2, 1978, most of Lake Camp's buildings were destroyed by fire, apparently in reaction to President Carter's national monument proclamation the day before. The remaining camp buildings have since fallen into varying states of collapse. [11]

The other Katmai-area camp that came to the NPS's attention during the 1960s was Enchanted Lake Lodge, located a mile south of Nonvianuk Lake. In 1964, Edwin Seiler began constructing a lodge complex at Enchanted Lake; he completed two guest buildings in 1965 and a lodge in 1966. By the end of the decade he had also constructed a warehouse and a mile-long road connecting his property to Nonvianuk Lake. Additional structures have arisen on the site since 1970. [12]

In recent years, NPS officials made two decisions that have negatively impacted tourist-oriented buildings in the monument. In 1984, they ordered Katmailand (which was then the park concessioner) to demolish or move the remaining asphalt-shingled cabins at the

original Brooks Camp site. They did so because the original camp, situated as it was in the lowlands near the mouth of Brooks River, was subject to periodic flooding and because the site was a primary travel route for the area's brown bear population. Katmailand, in response, demolished some cabins and moved others in 1985 and 1986; as a result, the only two "original" Brooks Camp structures have not only been modified by the addition of asphalt shingling, but they have also been moved.

Historic Property Summary and Recommendations

As the narrative above has suggested, the first structures in the monument that are related to a tourism theme were constructed in 1950, when NCA officials decided to build five fishing camps in the lake country west of the Aleutian Range. From south to north, these five were **Brooks Camp**, **Coville (later Grosvenor) Camp**, **Kulik Camp**, **Nonvianuk Camp**, and **Battle Lake Camp**. The camps, not surprisingly, started modestly; their first structures were either tents or wall tents. Most if not all of these tents were soon replaced with structures featuring asphalt shingling over a wooden frame. By the mid-1950s, however, both the National Park Service and NCA began building wooden structures: the NPS's first structures were crafted from local lumber, while NCA constructed Panabode-style buildings. (By 1962, the NPS was also using the Panabode style in its new Brooks Camp buildings.)

The various camps, therefore, are an amalgam of buildings. Each camp still boasts several asphalt-shingled tents; these are the oldest buildings, but all have been modified from their original wall-tent construction, and in Brooks Camp's case, the two remaining buildings of this style are no longer on their original footings. The second oldest set of buildings, all of which are still standing, are the two log buildings that the NPS built during the 1950s (the ranger station and the boat house, both located at Brooks Camp) and the concessioner's first two wooden buildings (the manager's office at Brooks Camp and Grosvenor Camp, respectively, both in the Panabode style). Next in order of importance, chronologically speaking, are the various buildings that the concessioner built from local lumber at Kulik and Nonvianuk camps, the most prominent being Kulik Lodge; these were built between 1958 and the early 1960s. Buildings erected during the same general time period, but of a different style, include Brooks Lodge, the various guest cabins, and the combination comfort station and bathhouse; these are all of Panabode-style construction. Of final note are the various NPS structures that were built during or slightly after the construction of the Valley Road; these include three employee cabins, a warehouse, and the Three Forks Overlook reception center.

Of this retinue, perhaps the most significant are the NPS's Brooks River Ranger Station (NPS Building No. BR-1, AHRS Site No. XMK-093), which was built in 1955, and the nearby boat storage house (BR-38, XMK-094), which was built circa 1959. They are considered significant because they represent the early period of tourism and park management in Katmai National Monument, and because their Rustic Style of construction hearkens back to styles found in other national park units. For both of these buildings, the National Park Service submitted a report to Alaska's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), requesting a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) to the National Register of Historic Places. In July 1999, the SHPO responded by agreeing that both buildings were eligible to the National Register under Criterion A. [13] This determination was made despite the fact that during the summer of 1998, an addition to the Ranger Station's east elevation dramatically changed its historic appearance. The modification is, however, considered reversible inasmuch as the original station walls and roof structure remain largely intact.





Kulik Camp during the late 1950s included the lodge and a few tent frames covered with asphalt shingling. *Wien Collection, AMHA.*

As the discussion above has shown, the Northern Consolidated Airlines camps erected various styles of buildings between 1950 and the early 1960s. Each of the structures built during this period has the potential for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. It is recommended that the historic buildings in these five camps—constructed by both the concessioner and the National Park Service—be further investigated for National Register eligibility. This investigation should include a field survey, further documentation, and subsequent data evaluation. Because they are manifestations of the early tourism industry in Katmai National Monument, these properties should all be nominated under a tourism theme, although a conservation theme may also be considered for properties erected by the NPS. And because of both historical and architectural similarities, it is recommended that a Multiple Property Documentation Form be employed. Such a form provides a streamlined method for organizing and registering properties, and it facilitates the evaluation of individual properties by comparing them with resources that share similar physical characteristics and historical associations.

Endnotes

¹ Frank B. Norris, *Tourism in Katmai Country* (Anchorage, NPS, 1992), 49.

² Been, *Field Notes of Katmai National Monument Inspection* 12, 30-31, 47.

³ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai Country*, 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 22-23, 37, 40-41.

¹⁰ The origin of the name "boat house" is uncertain, as there is little information regarding boats that the NPS used during this period (See Chapter 5). The "boat" being referred to may have been the small craft that staff used to cross Brooks River, or it may have referred to a Mission 66 proposal that would have brought visitors from Brooks Camp to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes via a combination boat service (to the mouth of the Ukak River) and a ten-mile road.

¹¹ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai Country*, 127-29.

¹² *Ibid.*, 125-26.

¹³ Judy Bittner to Deborah Liggett, July 6, 1999, in LAKA cultural resource files.

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Katmai

Building in an Ashen Land: Historic Resource Study



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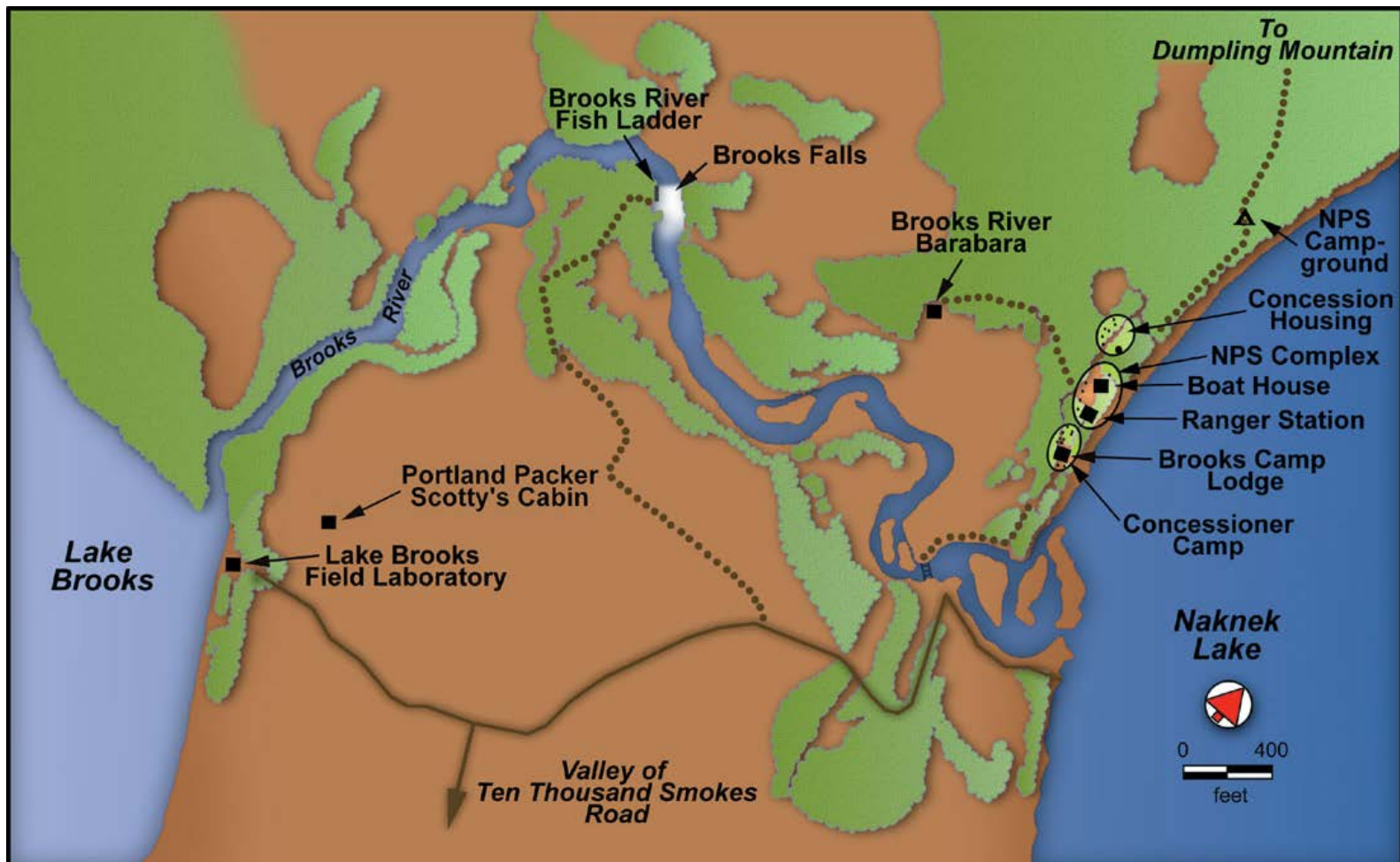


Roy Fures cabin at Bay of Islands. *NPS-AKSO*

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Draw diagram of your homestead or entry below showing cabin and improvements corner posts and distances.



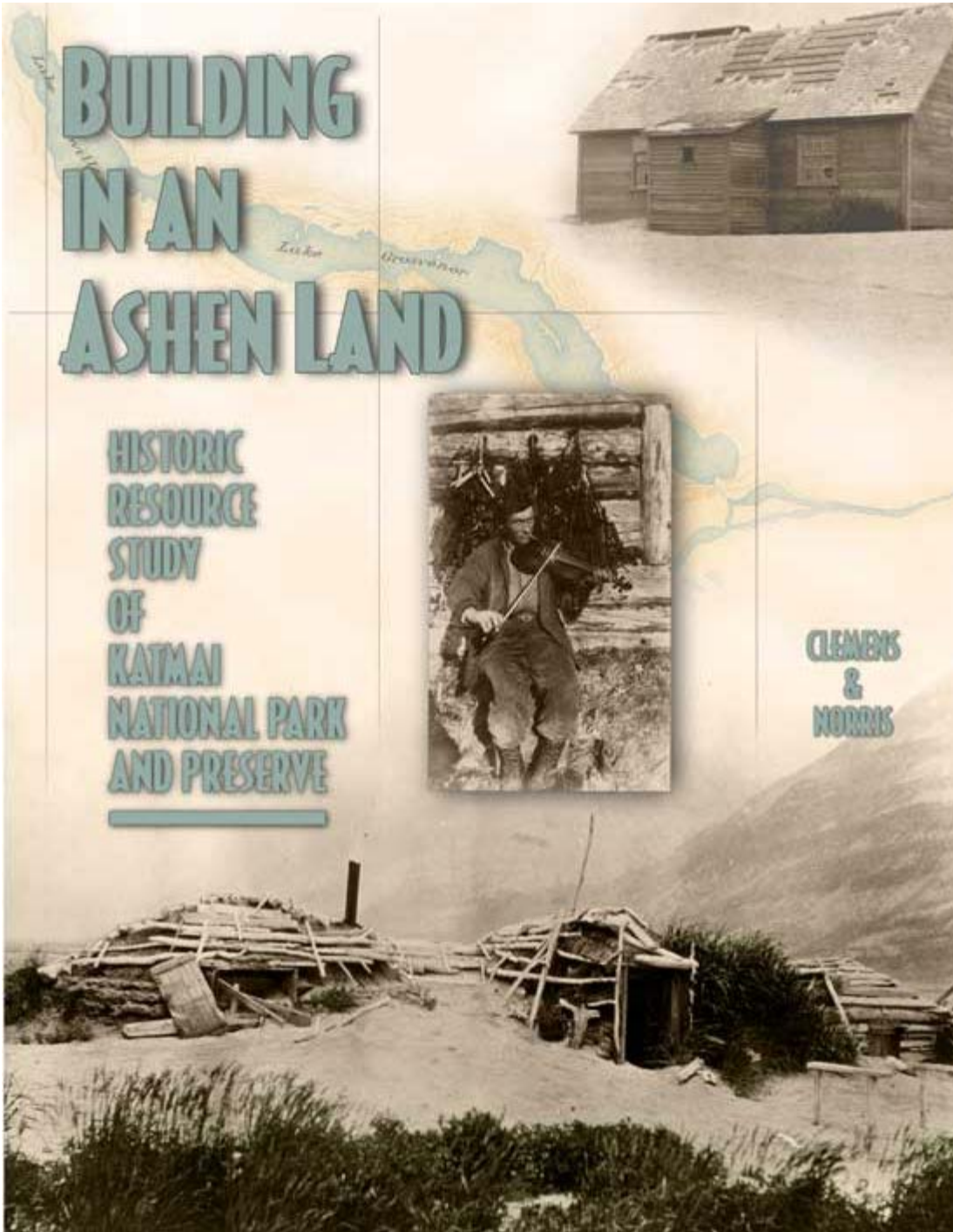
EXHIBIT "A" PS. 2

BUILDING IN AN ASHEN LAND

HISTORIC
RESOURCE
STUDY
OF
KATMAI
NATIONAL PARK
AND PRESERVE



CLEMENS
&
NORRIS













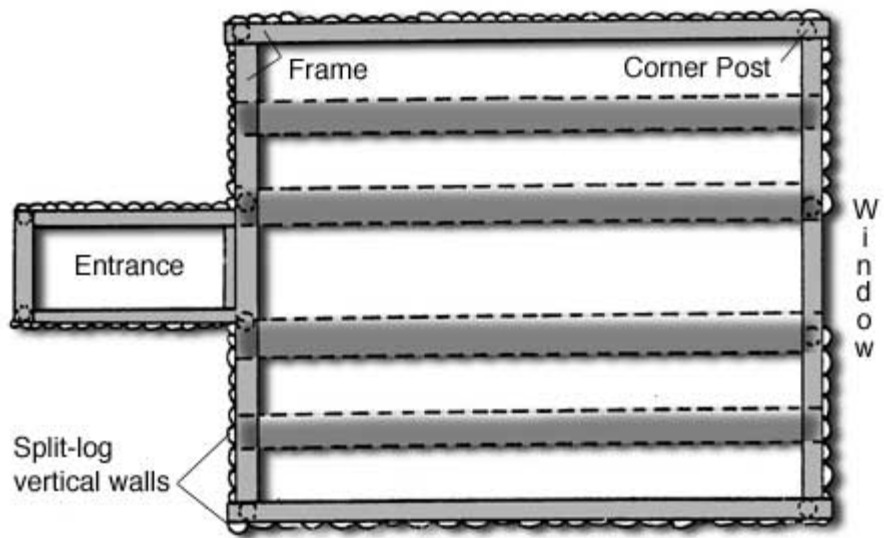


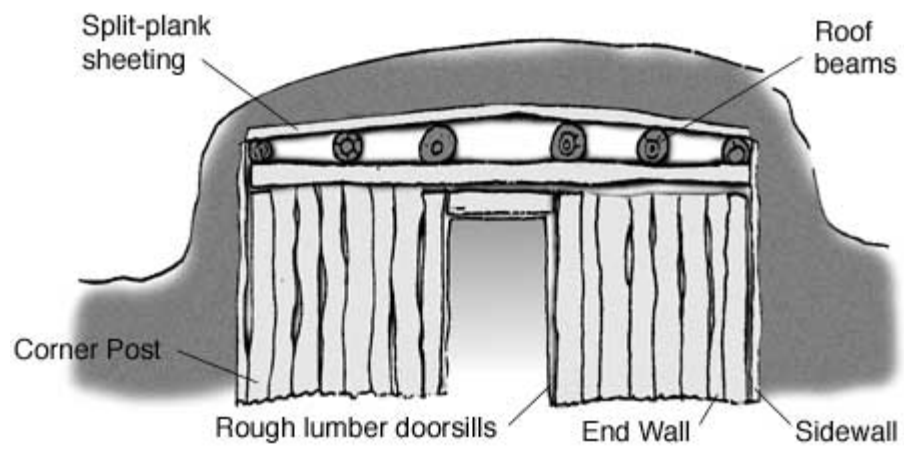


Douglas April 1st 1888

Inventory of stock on hand at Kukul Awa

✓ 67 yds	Wick	30	22 10
✓ 122 "	Blue Drill	30	36 60
✓ 210 "	Wool Cotton	15	31 50
✓ 135 "	Wool do	25	27 60
✓ 48 "	Wool Blue Shirting	25	10 -
✓ 43 "	Wool do	40	17 20
✓ 57 "	Wool Broadcloth	15	8 50
✓ 1 R	T Hinges		80
✓ 16 Bds	gun caps	100	6 40
✓ 25 "	do	20	8 40
✓ 1	Wool Sock		1 50
✓ 15 Bds	Hair Oil	50	2 -
✓ 4	Wool Wool Caps	50	2 -
✓ 2	Wool	100	2 50
✓ 5	Wool Wool Caps	15	70
✓ 5	Wool	20	1 -
✓ 30 R	Wool Wool Caps	20	7 60
✓ 2	Wool Wool Caps	15	3 -
✓ 1	Wool Wool Caps	20	2 -
✓ 15 "	Wool	10	1 50
✓ 4 Bds	Wool	2	2 -
✓ 320 "	Wool Wool Caps	40	131 20
✓ 200 "	Wool	70	171 -
✓ 1 Bds	Wool	16	-
✓ 10 Bds	Wool	20	-
			566 15









Copy

Douglas Mendenhall

Agreement between A. L. Company & Douglas Chief 1904
 we the Alaska Com. Company do agree to give the Chief
 of Douglas Settlement the amount of 20 per month
 in Provisions in consideration of his helping his men
 hunting and likewise helping the Agent informed
 of all furs caught by the natives in the Settlement
 to see that all furs are brought to the Agent as soon
 as possible and that no furs are taken out of
 the Settlement to be shipped at the Company's
 direction



































































































































